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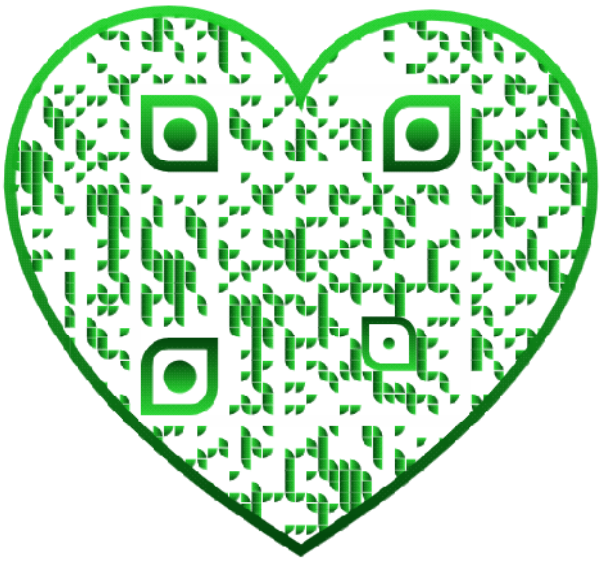

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Exploring Millway Dock in OO

Boats, rail and road all come together on this immersive layout, inspired by the busy workings at the River Humber.

PLAY

Basic Ballasting

We all need to ballast our layouts, Phil Parker shows how he does this on our NG7 project model.

Tony Wright's 2024 locomotive projects

Prolific modeller, Tony Wright, talks us through seven locos that he has built over the last 12 months, plus takes them for a run on 'Little Bytham'.

HORNBY®

MODEL RAILWAYS

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For More Info

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A RAILWAY MODELLERS WISH LIST

We've handpicked some of our most popular sets for beginners to embark on their model railway journey But that's not all! We also offer a wide range of accessories for those looking to enhance their layout and take their Hornby experience to the next level.

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3

4

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2: **R1255M** Flying Scotsman Train Set
3: **R1230M** High Speed Train Set
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Activity in the Yorkshire Dales in the early 1900s provided plenty of inspiration for this reservoir construction railway.

p20 Millway Dock (OO)
Boats, rail and road all come together on this immersive layout, inspired by the busy workings at the River Humber.

p32 Bred Albin (OO)
Inspired by the writings of Iain Rice, this excellent cameo scene captures the beauty of West Perthshire in winter.

TRACTION

A CELEBRATION OF CLASSIC DIESELS & ELECTRICS
TRACTION
The life of Class 02s
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• Mendip PGA wagons
• Scotland or Bust

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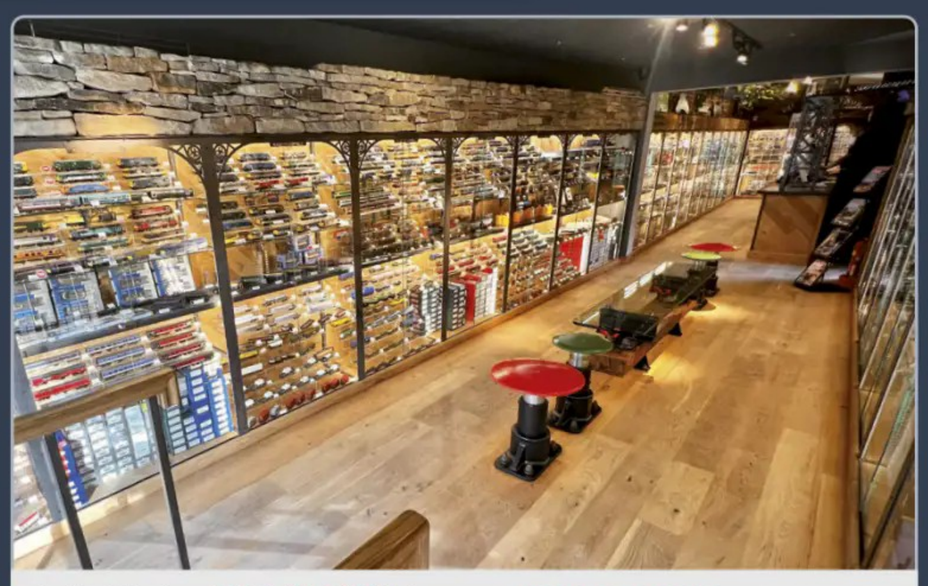

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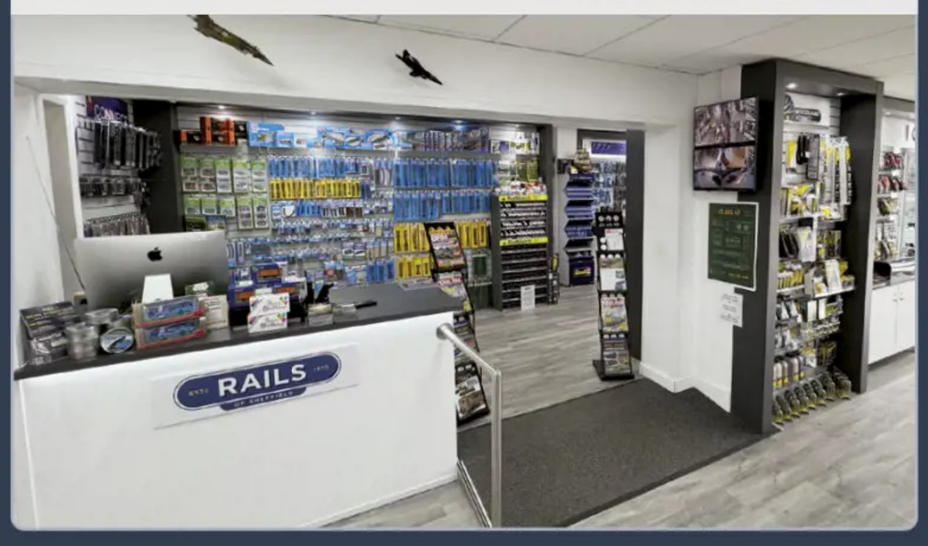

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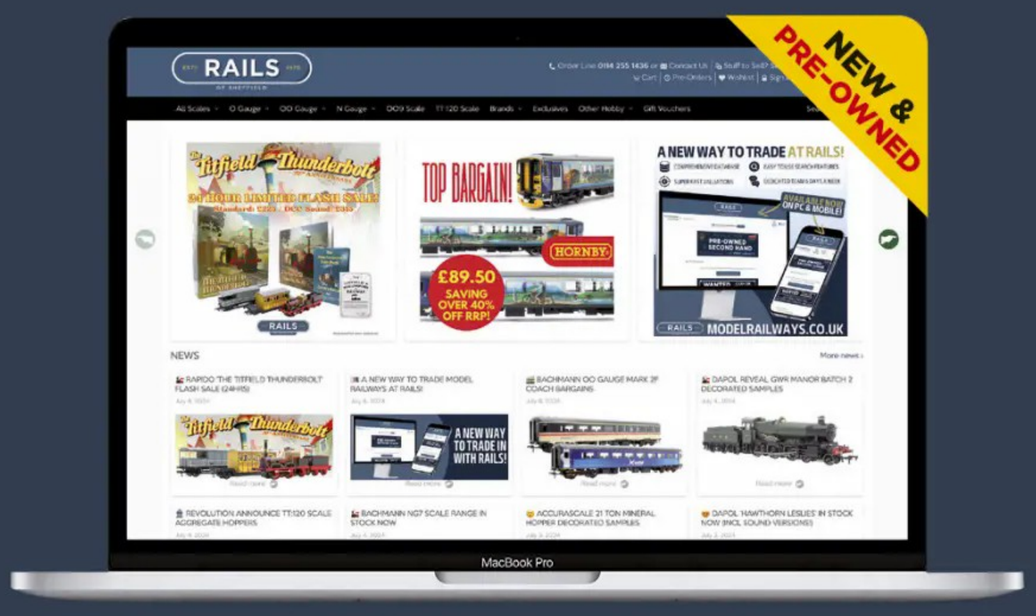

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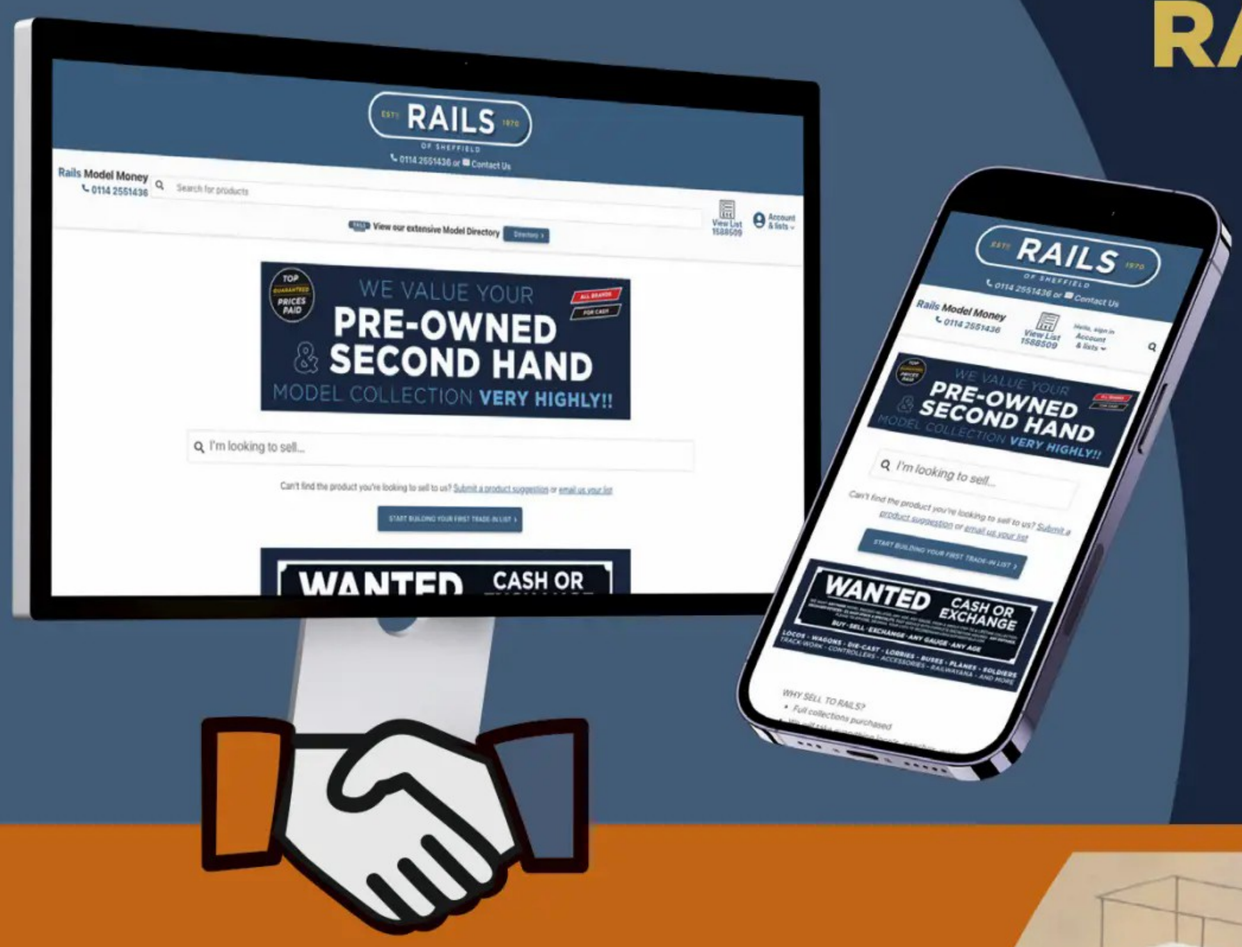

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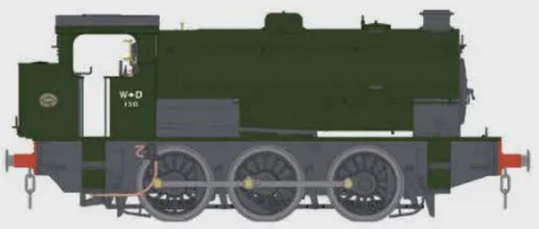

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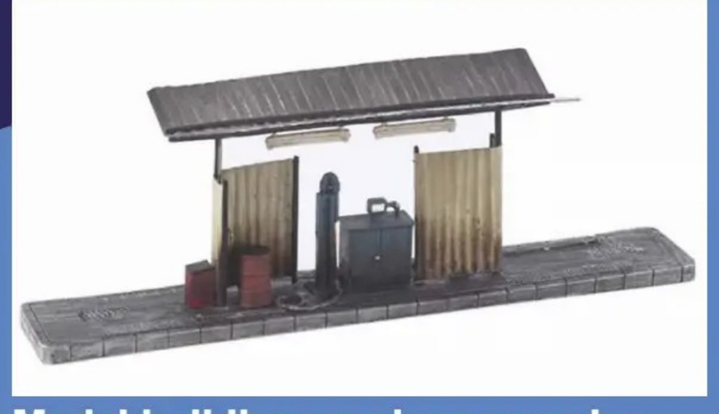

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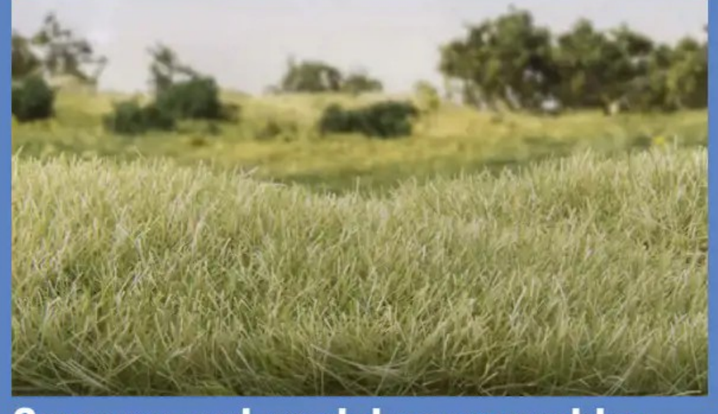

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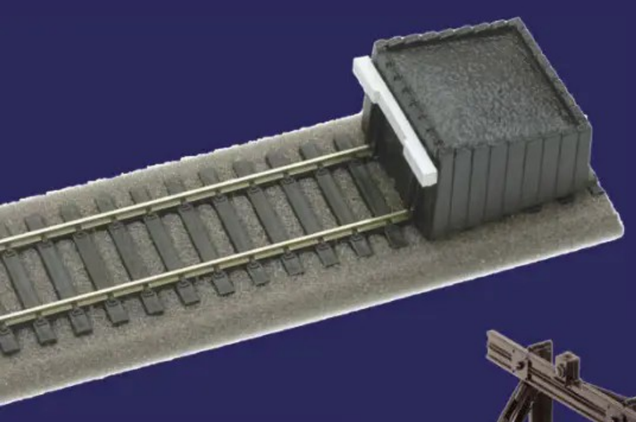

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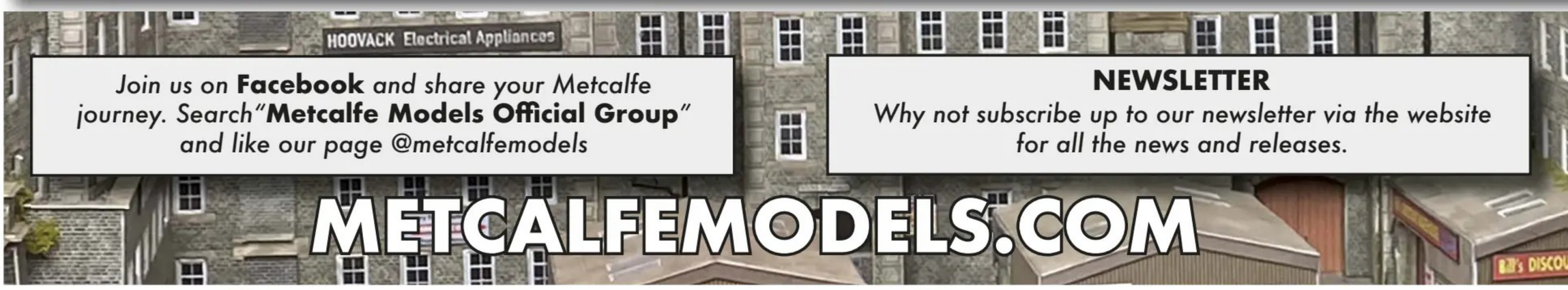

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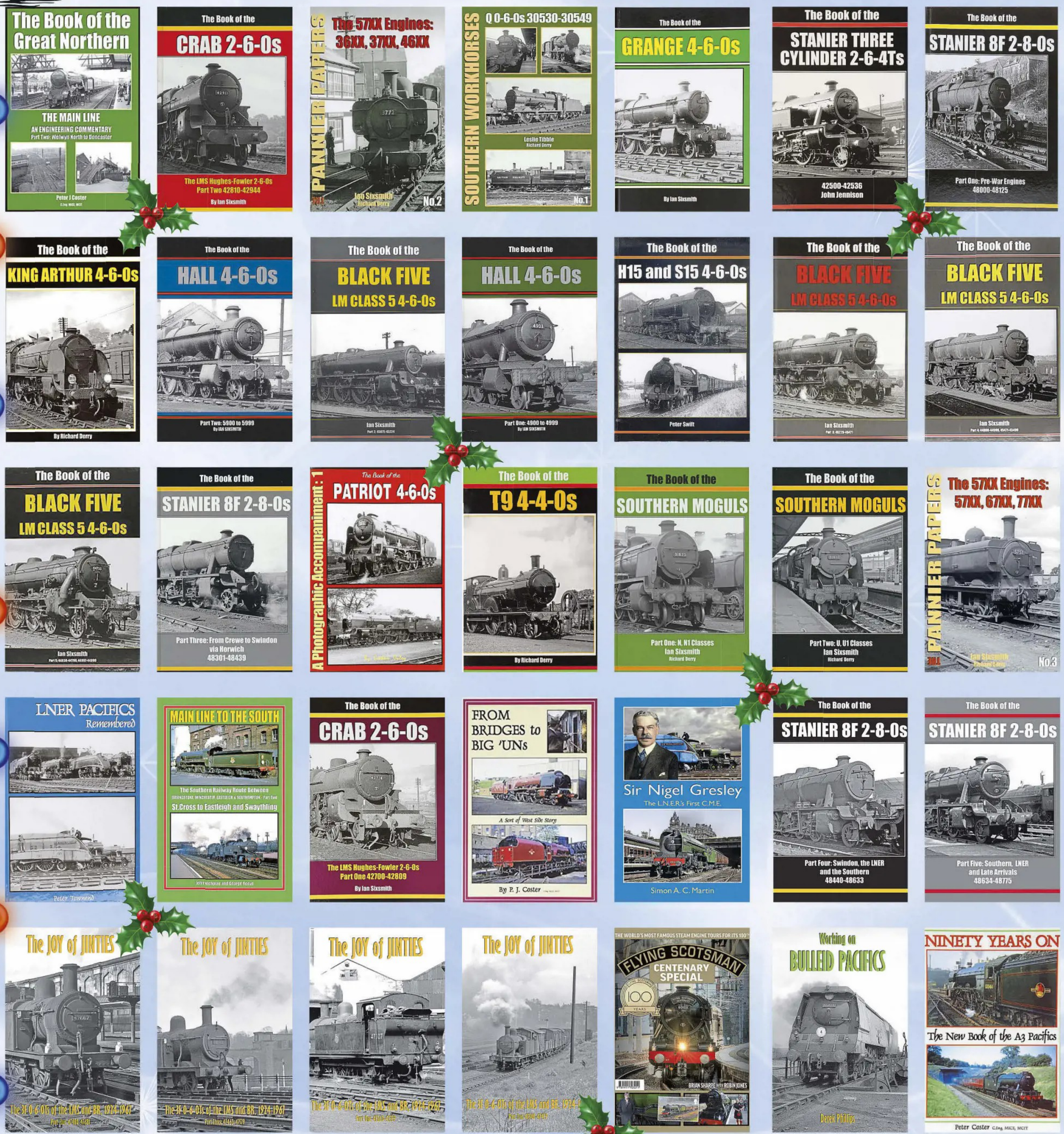

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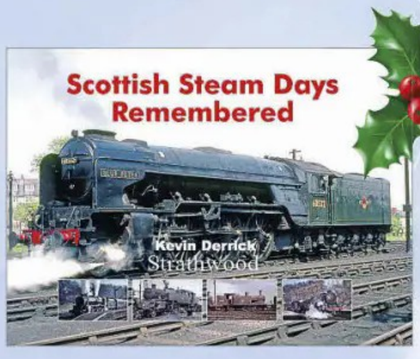

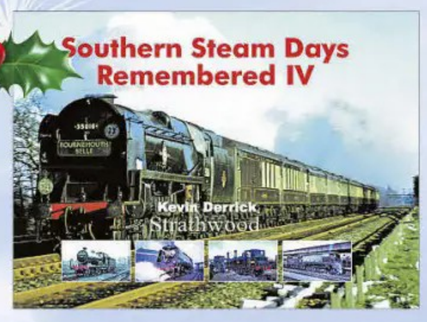

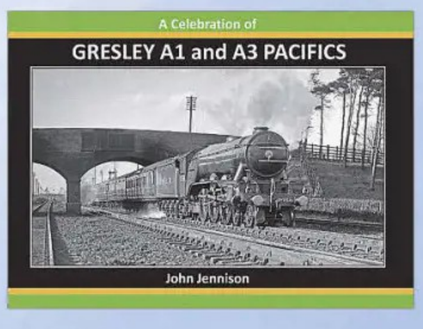

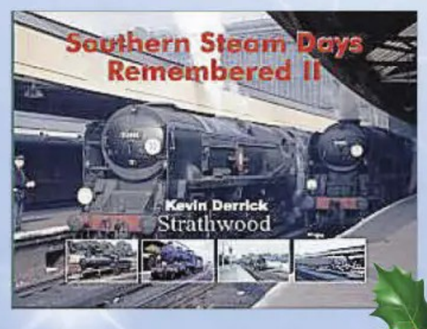

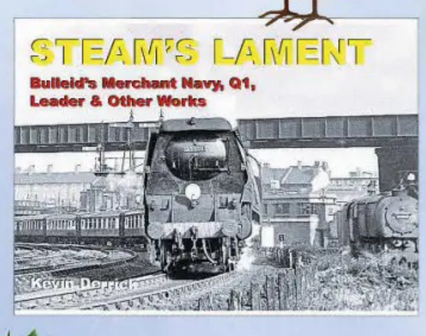

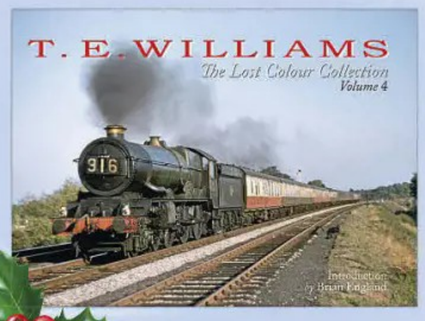

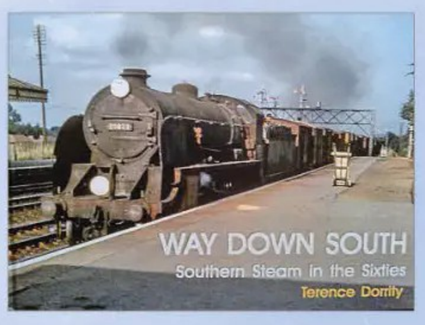

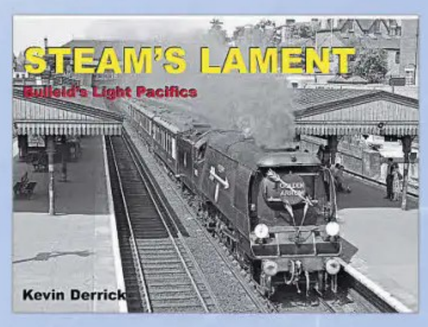

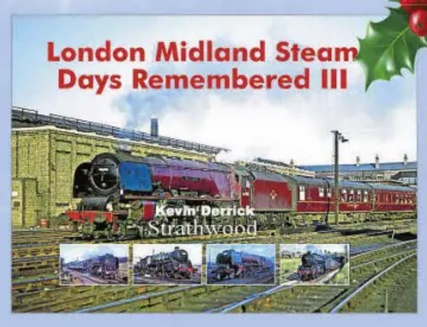

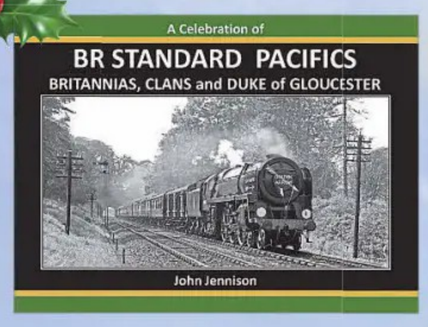

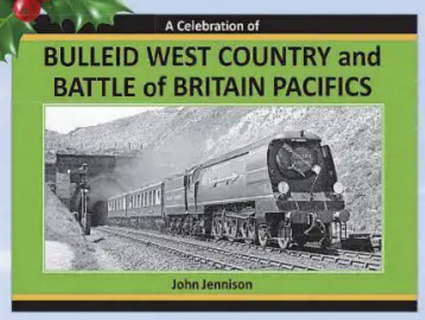

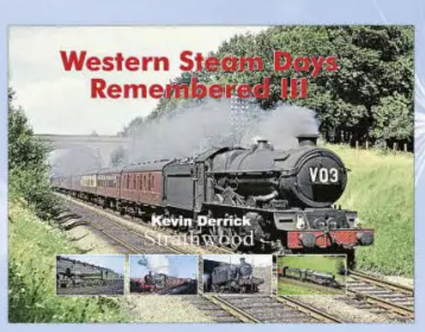

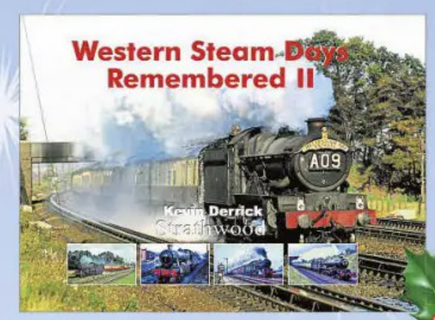

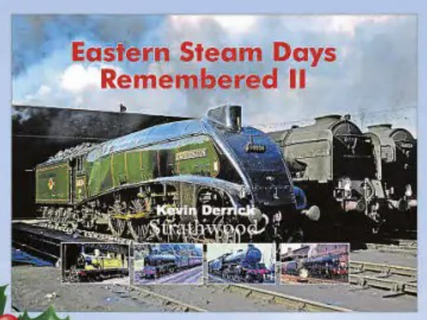

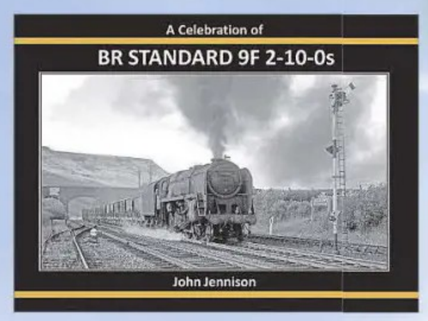

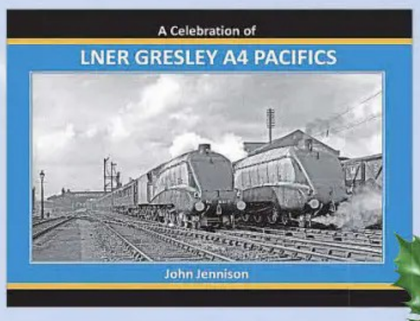

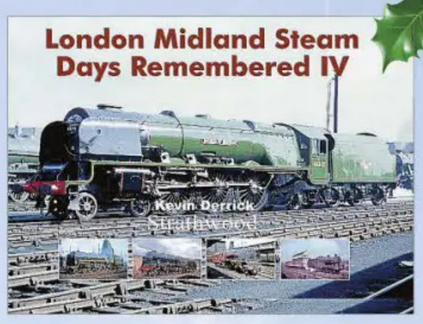

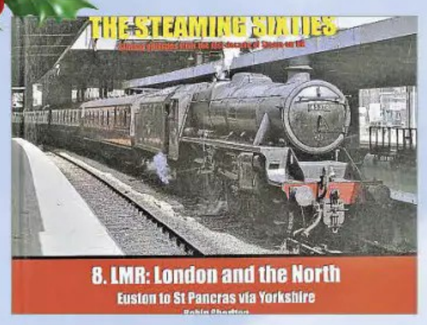

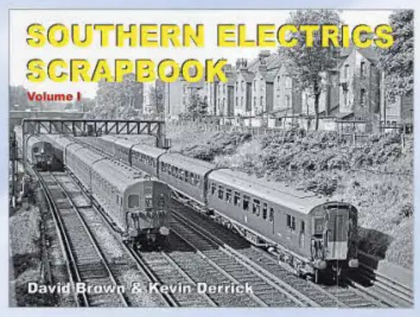

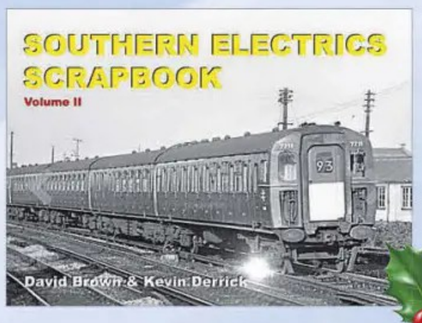

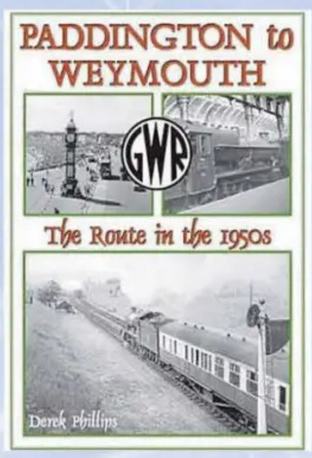

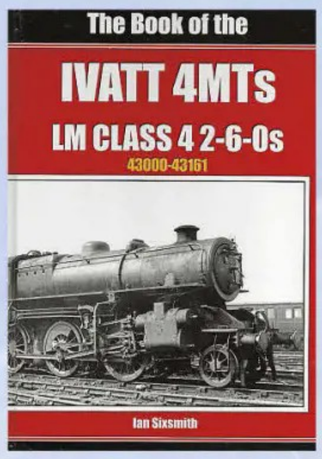

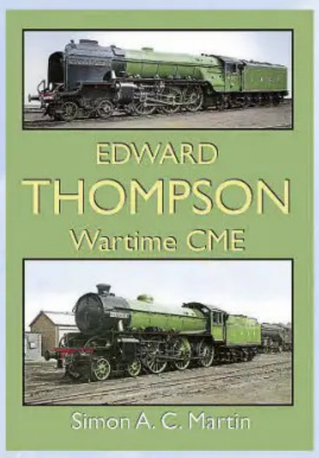

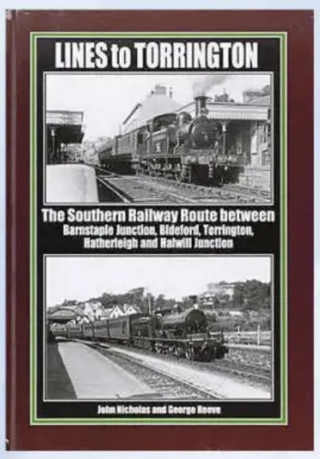
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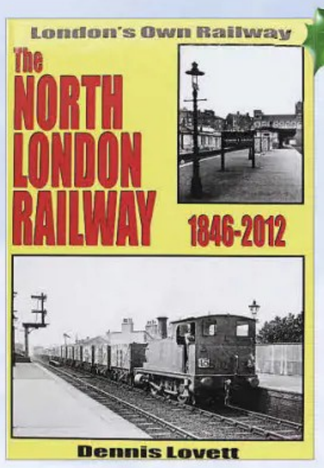

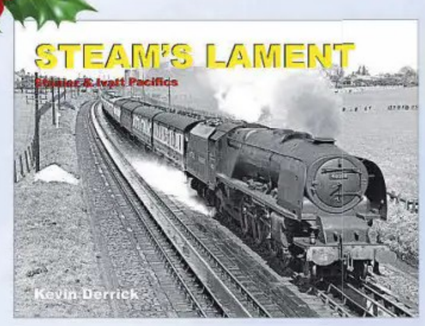

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FACTFILE

NAME: Millway Dock
SCALE/GAUGE: 4mm:1ft/16.5mm/OO
SIZE: 14ft x 2ft
ERA/REGION: 1960/1990s
LAYOUT TYPE: End-to-end

0-6-0 Sentinel LPA No. 15 passes bunkers barge *Noah* with military traffic from Kineton.

DOCKSIDE

Boats, rail and road all come together on this immersive layout, inspired by the busy workings at the River Humber.

Words: Kevin Broadhurst **Photography:** Jamie Warne

'Millway Dock' originated from a layout called 'Leaford', which retired from the exhibition circuit in 2013. On its retirement, it returned to its normal habitat, which was my dining room, and after a while, to keep my interest in the layout, I decided on a couple of extensions, one of which eventually morphed into 'Millway Dock'; my inspiration coming from a layout called 'Wintringham Haven' from the Hull Miniature Railway Society.

As time moved on, it became obvious that my wife's health was not good and we would have to move house to one more suitable. Thus, following on from that conclusion, it was decided that 'Leaford' would have to go. However, I thought it would be nice to keep 'Millway Dock' and, with a few modifications, it could turn into an exhibition layout.

So, I ordered new free-standing baseboards, including two new fiddle yards/sector plates to form an end-to-end layout with an overall size of 14ft X 2ft. In this format, it could fit into the spare bedroom for the foreseeable future until our house was sold and a bungalow procured. The rest of 'Leaford' was put up for sale, and I spent many hours of enjoyment in the spare bedroom playing with 'Millway Dock'. Eventually, we moved into our new bungalow.

ABOVE: An unusually quiet moment for the lads on the Pilot Boat as the busy dockside goes about its business.

MIDDLE LEFT: Hired preserved Class 03 hauls POA wagons along the dockside to be loaded with scrap destined for Sheerness.

BOTTOM LEFT: The overhead gantry crane used to transfer loads from road to rail and vice versa can be seen in the background.

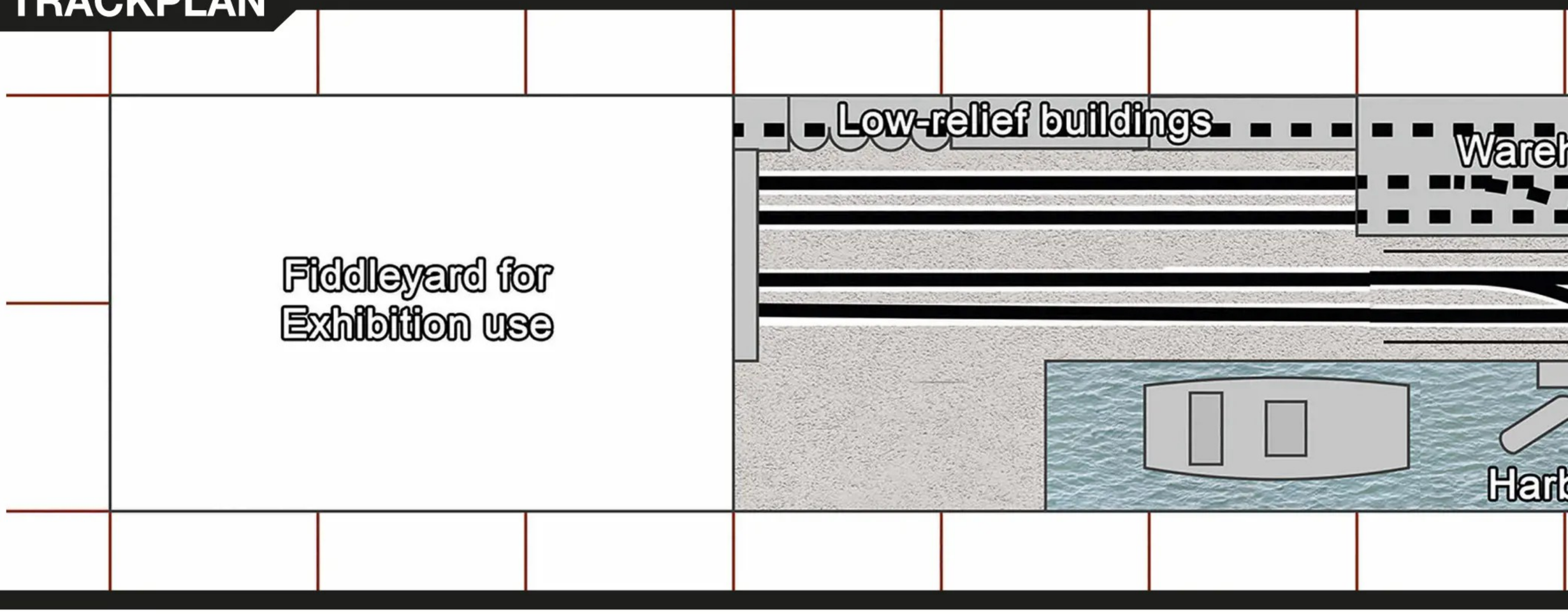
RIGHT: A good selection of freight traffic can be seen on the dock, including steel RSJs, fuel oil, and cruise ship baggage.

NEAR RIGHT:
Another view of 0-6-0 Sentinel No. 15, the driver of which likes to keep an eye on his trusty Volvo estate parked in its usual place.

TOP FAR RIGHT:
LPA's 0-6-0 Janus No. 10 hauls more military traffic past the *Molly J,* while timber and china clay traffic is also present.

BOTTOM FAR RIGHT:
Another shot of LPA Janus No. 10, emerging from the shed past the harbour master's building.

TRACKPLAN



Once we moved in, I quickly realised that there was no room for the layout inside, so a 20ft x 10ft shed was purchased and then erected by two very good friends from RMweb, Paul (PaulRHB) and Ian (Temeraire). 'Millway Dock' had a new home - thank you so much lads.

Construction highlights

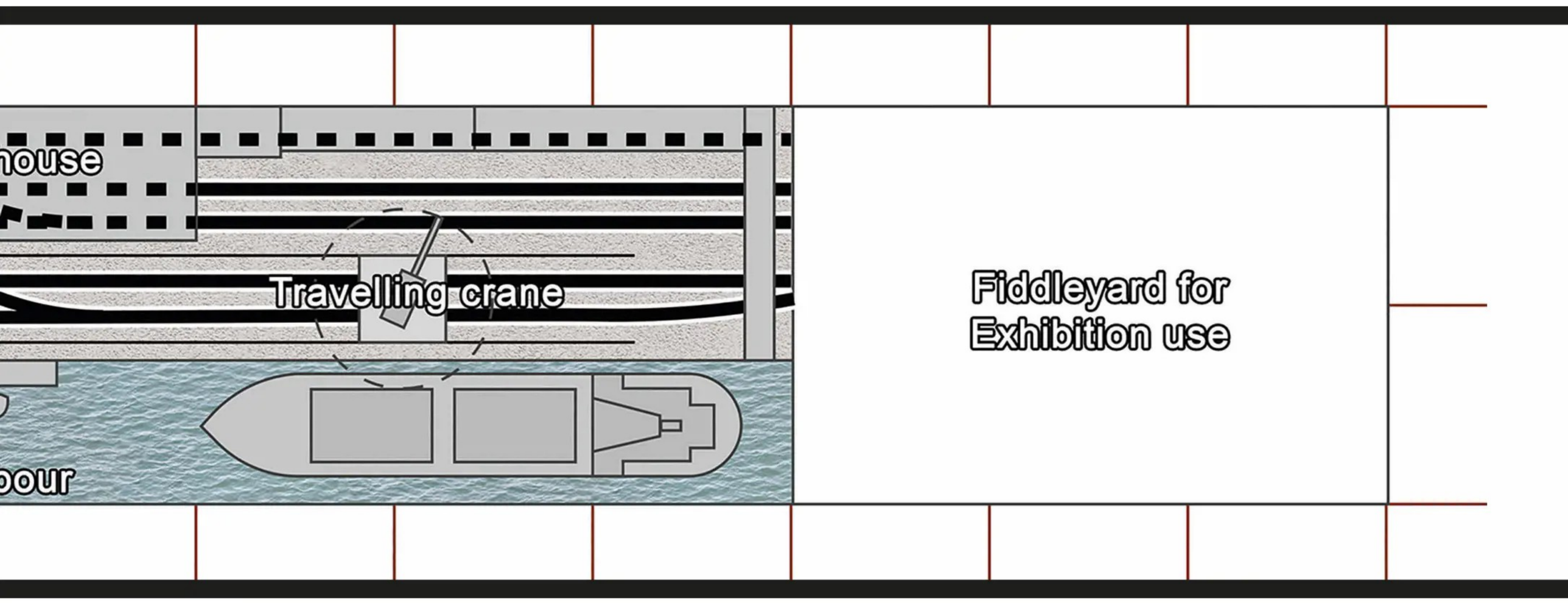
The layout's free-standing baseboards were constructed by Model Railway Solutions in Poole and a very good job they did too (using 12.5mm good-quality plywood).

I use code 100 track because the extra depth of the running rail means I am able to use card (Metcalfe tarmac sheets) cut to shape to form the rails-in-road effect on the dockside. I paint the top of the rails with black paint – carefully place the card white-side down on the top of the rails when the paint is still wet, which then gives me a marker as to where to cut the card to get a nice tight fit between the rails. The card is then painted a suitable shade of concrete/blacktop paint - make sure you thoroughly clean any paint off the rails afterwards to ensure good running. This method is good for modern rolling stock, but I am afraid not good for Lima or similar pizza cutter wheel flanges.

In terms of buildings, all are products of American kit manufacturer, Walthers. In my opinion, these kits are very good value for money, easy to build and modify to suit the needs of the layout and do not look out of place on a UK layout. None of the kits I have used are without modification of one sort or another and, when suitably weathered, can look very good.

Layout Control

The control of the layout is DCC and to that end, I use an NCE Powercab, which I have found very easy to use and reliable. I use Peco code 100 track and, with only four points (powered by DCC Concepts Cobalt iP point motors) and sector plates in the fiddle yards, the wiring was very simple, especially using DCC. The method I use to route set is to use the macro system in-built into the Powercab. What happens is that rather than change



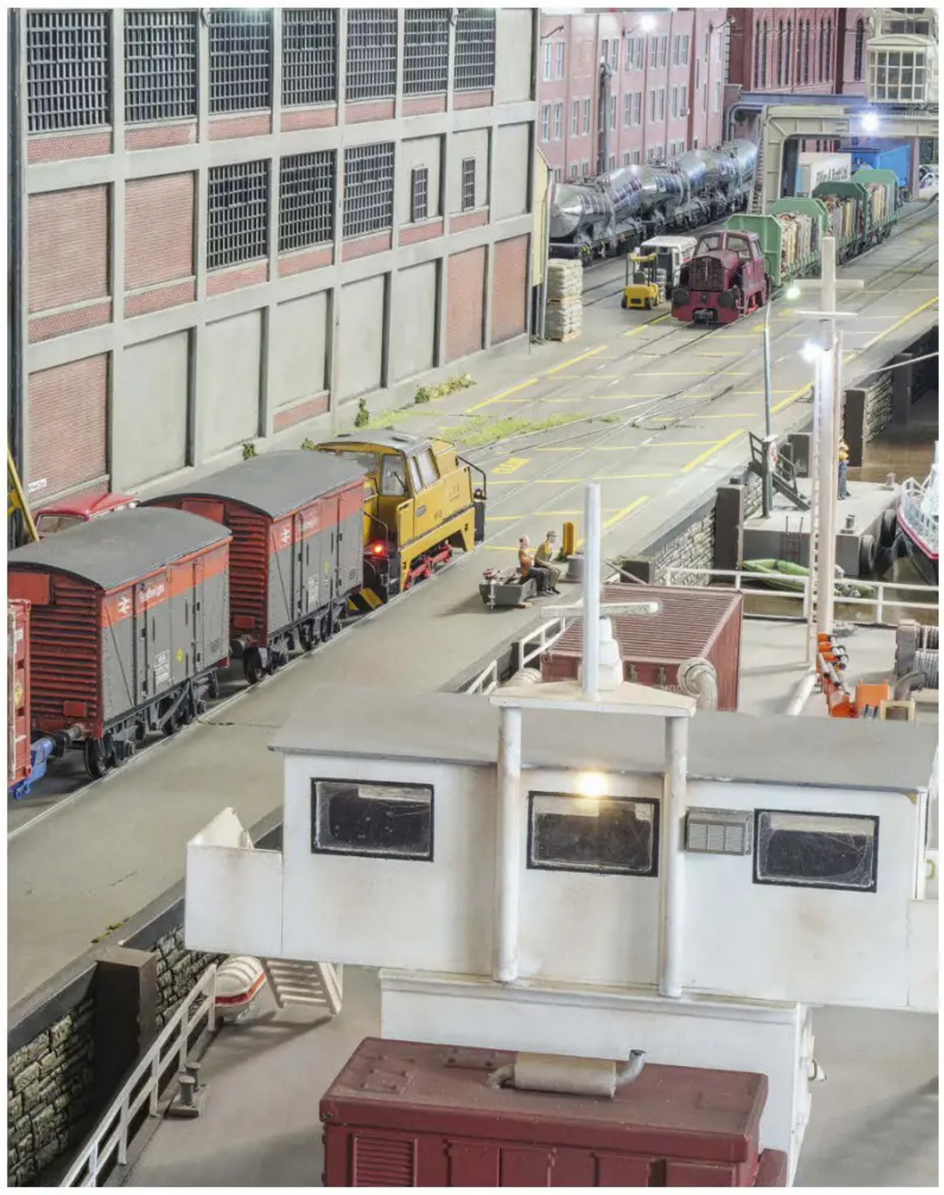
A better view of the excellent Pilot Boat given to me by Nigel Crow as the 03 progresses along the dock, passing two old gentlemen having a good old chinwag.

points individually, one can collate all of those individual points into a collection and then make one command and they all change as one. Obviously, if one collates the correct points, they will then form a route for your trains to progress through.

I also find with the Powercab, you can make the locos run much smoother, with much more realistic speed control by adjusting start speed, max speed, mid speed, acceleration rate, deceleration rate, and others. I am sure other DCC control systems offer the same features, but the Powercab does not necessarily rely on a knowledge of CVs.

The layout can appear in two modes; either the '60s period or the '90s. As 'Leaford' was set in the '90s, that was the default. However, since 'Leaford' was sold, I fancied going back to my youth to the days of my loved diesel hydraulics, with Warships being a particular fetish (of course, living alongside the Waterloo-Exeter route). The fact is no main line locos work the Docks in either mode, but Sentinel, Janus, 08s and 07 shunters can cover both periods. At present, there are 12 shunters available for work in the docks; most are in the livery of the L.P.A Leaford Port Authority, and all are fitted with lights, sound and stay-alive units. What does change between the two timescales is the freight stock, with air brakes prevalent in the late period and vacuum in the early – I hope those shunters are dual braked? The road vehicles all change, of course, with British Road Services vehicles being represented in the '60s period.

All of the rolling stock is freight-based in both '60s and '90s. Most of the '90s' stock is 30 years or older, being Cambrian kits or Lima that were used on previous layouts. There are obviously more up-to-date models from the many suppliers for this period used on the dock as and when they have been released and taken my fancy.



ABOVE: An overall view across the layout shows the bunkers barge *Noah* with LPA Sentinels No. 15 and No. 8 *Tiger* in the distance.

The Dockside Crane

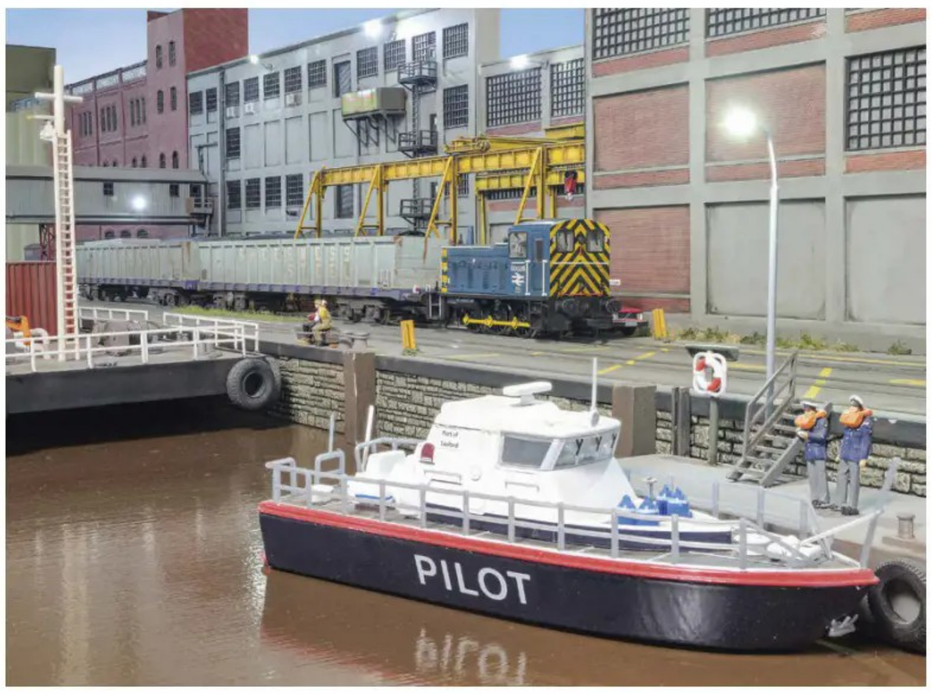
The beautiful dockside crane was built for me by a friend and colleague of over 40 years, Nigel Leadbetter. He was a brilliant modeller; not just of trains (he never actually built a layout for himself), but if something took his fancy, he would have a go. Previously on a layout of mine called 'Leaway Park', there was a scenic feature that purported to be a modern multi-storey car park under construction (just a few columns stuck out of the ground with RSJs hung up between them, along with general construction site plant and machinery and stuff). After about six months, Nigel said it was about time the car park was finished, and three weeks later, he turned up with a completed five-storey car park built entirely out of Plastikard. As a professional civil engineer, it was very prototypical and looked fantastic, it even fitted in the space on the layout perfectly.

Nigel turned up one day, inspected the Dapol dockside crane kit I had just completed and mounted along the dockside, and announced, "I am sure I can do better than that". Several weeks later, true to his word, he opened a shoe box he had brought with him and inside was the crane you now see on the layout. It was built from a mash-up of Dapol and Pola kits and an awful lot of ingenuity and scratch-building..

Sadly, Nigel passed away a couple of years back, and I do miss his down-to-earth ability to make light of a difficult build or modification and to come up with a solution. He was a very good friend, and I had to smile at his funeral to see his coffin in true Nigel fashion, made out of cardboard and plywood; he probably designed and built it himself.

ABOVE: The driver of the Volkswagen van has disappeared to find out how he is supposed to get the orange lifeboat into the back of his van. Meanwhile, two NSE vans full of luggage are being unloaded for transfer to a calling cruise ship.

MIDDLE RIGHT: Local haulier, Fillian & Scott's transit van is about to be loaded with bagged goods, while LPA's No. 8 *Tiger* is ready to depart with recently loaded PTA timber wagons.



BOTTOM RIGHT: Bachmann Class 0-6-0 03 03026 hauls two ancient Appleby kits (probably 30 years old) along the shoreline.

All of the '60s stock is a lot newer, probably bought in the last four years, the vast majority being Dapol unpainted (excellent value) and Parkside kits, which I then went on to paint and build. There are also wagons and vans from the main manufacturers, again when released, and they fit in with the general theme.

Ships and Boats

I suppose the ship I first noticed when initially seeing the layout is the largest, that being the *Molly J*. She actually started off as a radio-controlled kit manufactured by Deans Marine and advertised as the Timrex in 1/72 scale. I had to modify the bridge, wheelhouse and cabin areas to look more of a scale-like appearance (she actually did exist but not exactly as I have modelled her). The two holds were modified to two of equal size, one having to be lengthened in order to accommodate the Ruston Bucyrus RB22 crane (Langley Kit). I really must get around to adding more detail to this ship.

When the layout is in '90s mode, there is *Noah* - a bunkers barge (refueler), which started as a Walthers car float kit that I shortened and added a new deck, pump room and wheelhouse built from Plastikard. I also added associated pipework (Knightwing) and an Oxford Diecast lorry-mounted generator set became the power plant. Other items comprised various deck

BELOW: A good view across the *Molly J* of Nigel's beautiful dockside crane and the general busy dockside.

machinery, including winches (Deans Marine), lorry loader/HIAB (Kibri), a Bachmann container and various other stuff from the scrap box to make up this vessel - altogether great fun.

Again, in '90s mode, there's a Pilot Boat of unknown origin supplied by a good friend of mine for over 30 years, Nigel Crow. He modified it to suit - thank you, Nigel, it fits in perfectly.

In '60s mode, an extra pier and barge stand where *Noah* is positioned. The barge is, I believe, a Kibri kit, and the pier was fashioned out of coffee stirrers and balsa wood.

Conclusion

'Millway Dock' is now part of another layout that has sprung up in my new shed. It is removable and can still attend exhibitions; it is only me that has restrictions, now being an old git!

I have been in this hobby for over 60 years now, and the one thing that has kept me interested in what I do is that I enjoy it and have fun. ■

COMMUNITY

EDITOR'S COMMENT

Regular readers of BRM will know that our publishing schedule sometimes doesn't follow the 'norm', which is why you are reading the January issue before we've enjoyed the festivities of Christmas. For those not familiar with why this happens, in a nutshell, BRM publishes 13 issues every year (an extra Spring issue comes out in February), and the later months of the year is where it falls a little out of sync so we can fit them all in.

So, that hopefully explains why I'm about to start talking about how great the festive period is for modelling...

All the extra holiday time provides more time to catch up on projects and finally build that kit that has been sitting on the shelf all year. All the team members are big fans of Christmas, especially as the office has an extended break – time to recharge and concentrate on our own projects.

We really enjoy hearing from readers about what they've built during the break and what projects they've decided to start planning for in the new year. Make sure you get in touch with us if you have something to share at the usual address, **brm@warnersgroup.co.uk**

We hope 2024 has been a fruitful modelling year for you all. If not, why not make that a resolution for the coming year?

Lacking inspiration? BRM is at hand to help. We have plenty of practical features in this issue that could definitely provide a challenge, or we have three sensational layouts to admire and gain some insight from. We've also included an idea for a Dunster-inspired layout inside, plus a possible trackplan to help you get started. We hope you enjoy the issue and all the team here wishes you a very merry Christmas and New Year.

Happy Modelling
Debbie Wood

FOLLOW UP

Thank you for including me on page 30 of the November issue of BRM. To be honest, I'd forgotten that I sent you the "starting out" photos. Anyway, the article ends with a promise of a follow-up photo or two, so I am sending some now.

John Thewlis

WEEKEND PLANS...

Blackburn & East Lancs MRS Show
Held at the Oswaldtwistle Mills Business Centre, BB5 0EY, 12 layouts will be on show over the weekend in a variety of gauges alongside a handful of traders. Entry costs £5 for adults, with under 16s free with a paying adult.
DATE: November 30-December 1st, 2024

Gauge O Guild Winter Show
Another new O Gauge show, as requested by members and held at the Robin Park Leisure Centre in Wigan, visitors can expect a range of O gauge layouts, demonstrations, plus trade and society stands. Admission, if purchased online ahead of the show, costs £10 for members and £15 for non-members.
DATE: December 7th, 2024

The Christmas Model Railway Show
Once again, Manchester Model Railway Society brings "the perfect pre-Christmas treat for all the family", with an even bigger exhibition featuring 27 layouts and over 30 traders. Held at the Sugden Sports Centre, this year, the special-themed area commemorates the work of the railways during World War II.
DATE: December 14-15th, 2024

Model Railway Exhibition
The Bridport & District Model Railway Club will be holding an exhibition at the Beaminster Public Hall, Fleet Street, DT8 3EF. Doors will be open from 10am until 4pm with a variety of layouts, trade stands and demonstrations exhibiting.
DATE: January 11th, 2025

Thamesmead Model Railway Exhibition
Organised by the Erith Model Railway Society at the Harris Garrard Academy, DA18 4DW, this two-day show features a wide selection of layouts and trade support alongside demonstrations and several society stands. Adult tickets cost £9 and £1 for children over the age of 5.
DATE: January 25-26th, 2025

ON THE HUNT

I'm trying to find out if there are any kit forms in N gauge of a LNER N7 Class 0-6-2T loco available.

I'm certain none of the main manufacturers produces this model (not sure why, as it was used on many NE and GE region branch lines), and from what I can see, only Langley Models make a white metal kit version, but I wondered if another company make kits or resin bodies of this loco class?

Paul Dunn

BRM Says: There is a 4mm scale N7 from Oxford, but there's not been an N gauge RTR model yet, as you say. I'm not aware of any other kits, but I would say the best thing to do is go on RMweb and post the question, as there are many modellers on there that have done many LNER projects.

COMPETITION TIME

Fancy winning one of the Hornby Dunster buildings covered in our layout inspiration article on page 54?

We have a Dunster Goods Shed and Dunster Station up for grabs, all you need to do is answer the following question.

In what year did Dunster Station open?
a) 1890 b) 1874 c) 1865 d) 1888

Head to: **www.world-of-railways.co.uk/Competitions** for your chance to win.

The competition will close on December 31st, 2024.

DON'T FORGET ABOUT BOOKS!

You have, as it were, 'inherited' me as I was originally a Traction subscriber! I have continued taking the combined title and generally like it.

However, two things in this issue I personally found annoying. In your editorial (p.28) in December BRM, you thanked "everyone who has gotten in touch". No thank you, we are not Americans! The past tense over here is 'got'.

Also, on p.48, Michael Russell says, "lots of photographs are available online". I think he should have followed that with 'and in books and magazines'. I am 63 and clearly remember life before the internet and do-everything mobile phones. I myself have hundreds of transport books, which I look after lovingly. I don't think you (or Michael) should, even by implication or accidentally, dismiss the thousands of books published about railways over many years. I have even had my first one published this year!

I'm not a complete Luddite, though! I have a mobile on which this is being sent, and I find the net useful, but I am looking at BRM in the 'old school' paper format.

Keep up the good work!

Adrian Willats

BRM Says: Thank you for getting in touch Adrian, and duly noted about both the Americanisation and the lack of reference to paper sources – we will certainly take it onboard!

A NEW HOME

On July 12th, the Trust received a call from Ecclesbourne Valley Railway asking whether the Trust would be interested in a unique Lesmac Arrow Motorised Trolley that it was looking to dispose of.

The Trust's board discussed this and by July 17th, a deal had been agreed for it to join our fleet.

Our generous supporters at Lesmac (Fasteners) Ltd have supplied us with documentation for the Trolley, as well as some original video clips of it being demonstrated.

With the EVR focussed on a number of events, it was agreed that collection would be delayed until after its main season. Andrew Briddon has kindly agreed to collect the Trolley for the Trust, and it will initially be stored at his Darley Dale site.

The Trolley was built in 2010 and is Lesmac Works No. LMA001. It was fitted with a Honda GX200 RHQ4 engine.

Once the Trolley has been collected, a full survey will be carried out to ascertain what work is required to return it to service.

The Trust is interested in any other photos and videos of the Trolley. If anyone has any, please contact the Trust.

The Trust continues to appeal for funds towards the £10k target we set ourselves last year and hopes that as we are able to share more positive news, more donations will be forthcoming to enable us to move more of our collection to our secure locations, provide further suitable storage accommodation for some of our older AND more historic vehicles and make some significant progress on several restoration projects.

Donations can be made in various ways and all details can be found on our website. Everyone's support to our ongoing appeal is very much appreciated.

Jonathan Flood – The Rail Trolley Trust

LAYOUT | OO | BRED ALBIN

WINTER IN CALEDONIA

Inspired by the writings of Iain Rice and his love for Scottish railways, this serial layout builder created this excellent cameo scene, capturing the beauty of West Perthshire in winter.

Words: Alisdair Macdonald **Photography:** Andy York

FACTFILE

NAME: Bred Albin
SCALE/GAUGE: 4mm:1ft/16.5mm/OO
SIZE: 7ft x 2ft
ERA/REGION: BR 1960s/West Perthshire/Fictitious
LAYOUT TYPE: Fiddleyard to terminus

The W+M railbus has arrived in 'Bred Albin' from Essex for assessment on its suitability to run on the branch. The keen-eyed will note 'Witham' is still on the destination blind.

The writings of Iain Rice have been an inspiration for me and for the ideas and standards that I hope to achieve with my railway modelling. In his book *Creating Cameo Layouts,* Rice describes a cameo layout as being "a representation which conveys the nature and character of a prototype in a small space while being executed to a high standard, the modelling being set off by a visually pleasing presentation". This description by Rice was my starting point for 'Bred Albin'.

For those who have memories of British Railways in the early-1960s, it was a time when the infrastructure of the railways in Britain was going through major changes. The steam age was coming to an end, diesel traction was being introduced, and Dr. Beeching, in his report, was rationalising and closing many of the long-established railway routes. Many rural branch lines in Sixties Scotland were served by passenger trains that comprised one passenger coach and one locomotive. The branch from Ballinluig on the Highland main line to the town of Aberfeldy in Perthshire had a passenger service, which consisted of a single coach train hauled by a BRCW Class 26 or a BR Sulzer Class 25. Further south, the Crieff Branch utilised an ex-LMS Black 5 with two coaches and latterly was served by a Park Royal railbus.

LEFT: A cold winter's morning in the goods yard with a consignment of bricks bound for the new building extension on the Laird's estate.

MIDDLE LEFT: The railbus arrives at 'Bred Albin'.

BELOW: Former Caledonian Railway Class 812 57566 shunts the yard.

"I do enjoy painting backscenes, and it is hoped that I have been able to show that 'Bred Albin' is located somewhere in a picturesque part of West Perthshire."

Then, there was probably the best known of all the Perthshire branch lines, which ran from Killin Junction down to the village of Killin. On the Killin Branch, the single coach service was hauled for many years by the veteran Caledonian Railway 0-4-4T Class 439 locomotives, which had been built back in 1910. These were only replaced in 1962 by 10-year-old BR Standard Class 4MT 2-6-4 tanks when the Callander and Oban main line was dieselised with Birmingham Railway Carriage and Wagon diesel Class 27s. The Killin Branch continued with steam haulage right to the end of its days when the branch closed, along with the Dunblane to Crianlarich main line in 1965. And to add to the operating variety, it must not be forgotten that the Killin branch, on occasion, ran mixed trains.

With a history of a number of one coach and one locomotive branch lines in Scotland, I had found a factual back story for my model of 'Bred Albin'. And with a few Scottish-themed locomotives sitting on a shelf in my shed, all the ingredients were there for a new Scottish-themed cameo layout.

Construction begins

The whole purpose of constructing a cameo layout is to keep it small. It had to be small enough to be easily transported, easy to erect and easy to dismantle at model railway exhibitions. 'Bred Albin' comprises two boards, each 1100mm long, making a total layout length

ABOVE: The signalman has come down the steps from the warmth of his box to collect the single line token from the railbus driver.

LEFT: Woodland Scenics Soft Flake Snow is held in place using a cheap hairspray. The aerosol blows the snow into small drifts and clumps and allows it to the fixed to the foliage and walls. Take care not to get any snow or hairspray on the railway lines.

BOTTOM LEFT: An old goods van body is used as the parcels store at the station. The backscene has been hand-painted in an abstract form using acrylic paints to help the viewer concentrate on the models in the foreground.

The locomotives of 'Bred Albin'

Caledonian Railway 439 Class 0-4-4 tank 55204 is a DJH Kit built some years ago by Peter Fletcher of York in EM gauge. It was converted to 00 gauge by Tony Geary and fitted with a Zimo chip and Digitrains sound. The locomotive is finished in BR black-lined livery.

Caledonian Railway Jumbo Class 0-6-0 57375 is another DJH Kit built by Peter Fletcher of York. It was converted to 00 gauge by Tony Geary and fitted with a Zimo chip and Digitrains sound. The locomotive is finished in BR plain black livery.

Caledonian Railway 812 Class 0-6-0 57566 is from Bachmann and fitted with a Zimo chip and Digitrains sound. The locomotive is finished in BR plain black livery.

BR 2-6-4 Standard Class 4MT tank 80053 is another Bachmann product with a Digitrains Zimo sound chip and finished in BR black-lined livery.

Diesel W+H railbus is an earlier version of the Heljan railbus, sound chipped by Tony Geary with a Zimo chip and Digitrains sound file and lightly weathered by Geoff Taylor.

The Class 26 is an ESU sound-chipped visitor from Graham Heald.

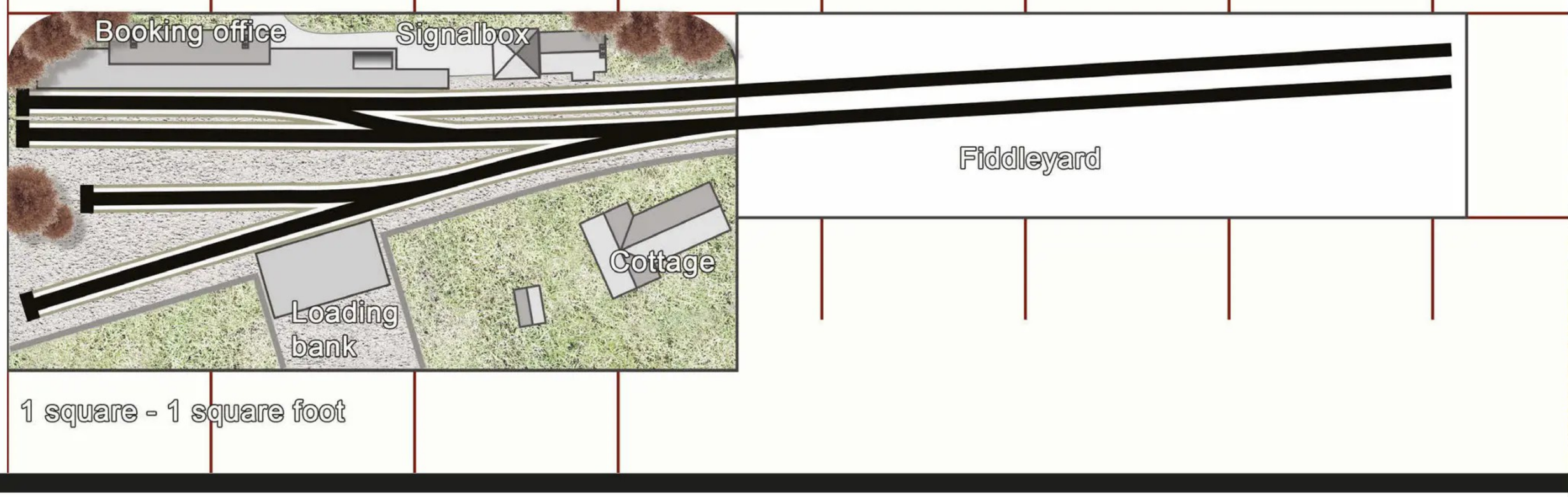
of 2200mm. On one board are the scenics, and on the second board is the fiddle yard. The scenic board has a depth of 535mm and the fiddle yard a depth of 290mm. With his excellent joinery skills, my good friend, Graham Heald, constructed the two boards from plywood and MDF, which were painted to seal their surfaces. A plywood lid was constructed to fit neatly over the scenic board with thoughts of lighting the layout.

The two boards are held together with woodworkers' clamps, located by carpenters' dowels. The boards sit on two aluminium channels laid over two decorators' steel trestles. 'Bred Albin' has a track level of 1200mm [four feet] above finished floor level to allow the viewer to be drawn into the scene.

For many modellers, the next stage in building the layout would be to progress laying the track, install the wiring and electrics and start running trains. I decided that at this stage the locations of the station building, the signal box and a farm cottage were more important than progressing with laying the track. The three structures were critical to the aesthetics and spatial limits of the scenic board. It was only when I had positioned the three buildings, along with the station platform, that setting out and laying of the track could be progressed. With the Peco bullhead code 75 track laid and the electrics installed, the buildings could now be permanently fixed to the scenic board.

ABOVE: 'Bred Albin' station building is based on the timber station structure which was to be found at Killin, another iconic Scottish branch line before the line closed in 1965 when the building was demolished.

TRACKPLAN



TOP RIGHT: The combined signal box and living accommodation for the signalman and his family was a typical feature on the remote passing loops on the former Callander and Oban line. It seemed appropriate to scratch-build a structure I have never seen modelled before.

MIDDLE RIGHT: After playing in the snow, young MacPherson heads back into the warmth of the family cottage.

BELOW: A general view of 'Bred Albin' station and yard.

Key buildings

Some years ago, I had the idea of constructing a model of the station and goods yard at Killin. It came to nothing, apart from having a scratch-built model of the now-demolished timber-framed Killin station building. The model had been constructed in Plastikard, with various additional fret components from York Modelmaking. The station interior has been lit with LED lighting, with three lamps to the station platform, all obtained from Layouts4U. 'Bred Albin' now had a station building.

At a number of locations on the Callander and Oban Railway, there were signal boxes, which were combined with living accommodation for the signalmen and their families. One of these unusual structures was on the now-closed section of line in the hamlet called Drumvaich *[pronounced Drum-Vie-Ach]* between the Perthshire towns of Doune and Callander. Although there was never a station here, the hamlet had a passing loop, complete with a combined signal box and cottage. With its Perthshire connections, I decided that the 'Bred Albin' signal box should be based on this unusual railway structure. The real Drumvaich signal box is still extant and is now a private residence.

> "At a number of locations on the Callander and Oban Railway, there were signal boxes, which were combined with living accommodation for the signalmen and their families."

The construction of the signal box model began by referring to photographs of Drumvaich signal box. No drawings of the original structure could be sourced and the photographs formed the basis for the model. A floorplan and elevations were drawn out using computer-aided drafting, which was then redrafted into the shapes required for the various components of the model. These were then laser-cut in 2mm MDF. When the parts were assembled, the external elevations were finished in stonework paper supplied by Scale Model Scenery, who also supplied the roofing slate. Like the station building, the signal box and the cottage interiors have been lit by LED lighting.

A laser-cut kit from Pop-Up Designs forms the basis for the farm cottage. To give the cottage a rendered appearance, the elevations were covered in a layer of PVA, which was sprinkled with a very fine sand to give an overall textured finish. When it had dried, the face was stippled in white acrylic paint to resemble whitewashed render. Laser-cut replacement windows were fitted, and like the other buildings on the layout, internal LED lighting has been fitted.

In the cottage garden, the greenhouse and garden frames came from Scale Model Scenery, and these were expertly put together by Graham. The plants inside the greenhouse were the work of my wife, Hazel. An LED-lit brazier can be seen burning garden rubbish, also purchased from Layouts4U.

TOP LEFT: A BRC&W Class 26 makes an occasional visit to the branch.

MIDDLE LEFT: Despite it being such a cold winter's day, Jock MacPherson still finds time to tidy up his garden.

BELOW: A BR Standard 2-6-4 4MT is caught on camera at the head of the one coach passenger service on the line.

"In a cameo layout, it is even more important to provide the right level of lighting, very much like a theatrical stage."

Lighting the layout

It always amazes me that when they are presented at model railway exhibitions, so many layouts have the minimum of lighting rigs or no lighting at all. There seems to be great reliance by some to make use of the unsuitable overhead lighting of the exhibition hall to light their layouts. This source of lighting does not provide a decent level of lighting to show off a layout to its best advantage.

A model railway layout at a show is very much a theatrical stage where the trains and scenery play their part as actors in a play. No one would attend a theatre if they could not see the performance on the stage, so why should our layouts be any different?

'Bred Albin' makes use of a proprietary LED 'Plug and Play' lighting strip, which was purchased from a DIY store. The LED lighting strip is around five metres long and arranged on the soffit of the box lid to provide an overall even level of lighting. The LED strip also has a built-in variety of colour combinations, all controlled from a remote keypad. This enables the lighting levels on the strip to be varied and controlled. A second daylight-cast LED batten fitting has also been fitted to the front top lid of the scenic board to fill in any shadows.

It has to be remembered that when low light levels are employed, the buildings on the layout need to be given a low subdued lighting level for the full effect.

RIGHT: Ex-Caledonian Railway 0-4-4T 55204 couples up to the single coach ready for the return service up the branch. Similar ex-Caledonian locomotives 0-4-4Ts ran on the Killin Branch until the early-1960s.

BELOW RIGHT: A lone passenger sits in the warmth of the railbus awaiting its departure in the fading light of a wintry late afternoon at 'Bred Albin'. The station lighting was purchased from Layouts4U.

Scenic touches

It is my opinion that the backscene and scenery should immediately define the geographic location of the layout to the viewer. I do enjoy painting backscenes, and it is hoped that I have been able to show that 'Bred Albin' is located somewhere in a picturesque part of West Perthshire. The backscene was painted in acrylic paints, and to avoid intrusive vertical joints to the internal corners of the cameo, the backscene is curved from the sides round to the back of the layout.

Landforms are generally not flat, and to form the contours of the landscaping, I employed my usual method of fixing polystyrene blocks with PVA and then covering them in a plaster bandage, all painted in a mid-brown colour to seal in the plaster dust. A static grass applicator was used to cover the ground with static grass from Woodlands Scenics and WWScenics to provide a bit of greenery. The landscape was then given a dusting in various shades of brown from aerosol rattle cans to represent dead winter foliage. The scenics have been completed by the planting of a number of the excellent dry larch trees produced by Primo Model Trees. The random rubble boundary walls are by Ten Commandments, finished in acrylic paints.

ABOVE: Another view of 57566 shunting a couple of coal wagons in the yard.

RIGHT: The green Class 26 BRC&W diesel is caught on camera at the loading bank.

BOTTOM RIGHT: Another view of the railbus at the station.

FAR RIGHT: A close-up of the station building complete with the author [modelled by Modelu] standing at the station master's office door.

An early decision was that the layout should be in winter. To complete the scene, 'Bred Albin' was given a light dusting of snow obtained from Woodland Scenics. The snow is held in place with hairspray, its aerosol blowing the snow into small drifts and clumps as would happen in real life. A similar sprinkling of snow was applied to the Primo larch trees. Care was taken not to get any snow on the railway lines!

Operation

All the locomotives on 'Bred Albin' have been fitted with DCC sound chips and are controlled by the NCE Power-Pro operating system. For me, sound adds to the general ambience and atmosphere of the layout.

Analogue Tortoise point motors are operated by switches on a central control panel, run from their own separate 12-volt supply. This 12-volt supply also powers the lighting of the building's LEDs and the Dapol starter signal at the station.

The rolling stock has been fitted with Sprat & Winkle couplings, with strategically-positioned magnets in the trackwork to assist uncoupling in the shunting moves.

A minimum-space layout requires the minimum amount of rolling stock. On 'Bred Albin', only one passenger coach is required, which has been fitted with interior lighting using components from Layouts4you and Express Models.

About the modeller

Name: Alisdair Macdonald
Age: 80
How many years modelling: More than I can remember
Name of your first layout: 'Ardbealach' in EM gauge
Favourite era/region: Scotland in the Sixties

Anyone who knows me will know that I have a particular leaning towards modelling the railways of Scotland. When I put together my previous model of 'Whithorn', I was able to build up a wealth of modelling experience and knowledge. It was a particular delight that 'Whithorn' was well received during its many years on the exhibition circuit, and it thrilled me even more when it won a number of modelling awards.

There is a small selection of goods vans, 16T mineral wagons and a couple of brake vans. The length of the fiddle yard sidings and the sidings in the goods yard limit the train lengths to a locomotive with three goods wagons and a brake.

Tongue twister

In keeping with it being a fictitious location, and somewhere in West Perthshire, the layout had to have a name that reflected its location. The Marquess of Breadalbane was one of the principal landowners in West Perthshire, and a major backer and supporter of the Killin branch when it opened away back in 1882.

The name 'Breadalbane' is derived from the Gaelic 'braghaid Albin', or 'the high country of Scotland', and is often incorrectly pronounced as 'Bred - All - Bain'. The correct pronunciation is 'Bread - Awl - Bin'. Hence, the layout name in the phonetics 'Bred Albin'.

Thanks must go to Graham Heald for his efforts in building the two baseboards and for his work to put together the greenhouse and cold frames to the farm cottage, and to my wife, Hazel, for all the support she gives me in this great hobby.

'Bred Albin' will be appearing at the Kilmarnock and District Model Railway Club Annual Show on January 25-26th, 2025, and at The Festival of British Railway Modelling in Doncaster on February 8-9th, 2025. ■

See 'Bred Albin' in action at
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Getting Practical with...

TOOL of the MONTH

Lathes

A few years ago, I very nearly bought a lathe. In my early model-making days, I believed it was a tool that "proper" modellers owned, so adding one to my workshop, would magically improve my skills. The trouble is, I couldn't work out what I'd do with it. I'm not going to turn my own wheels or boiler fittings. I can buy what I need ready to use. Worse, there is a significant learning curve to get the best from the machine, so in the end, I didn't bother. It doesn't stop a tool collector like me from wondering, though. Can any BRM reader persuade me?

Ask Phil

Do I need to prime plastic for acrylic paint?

Maybe. Some acrylic paints stick perfectly happily to some plastics. Others simply won't cover and need a thin coat of primer. The only way of finding out is to apply a little paint to the plastic somewhere inconspicuous and see what happens. If the kit is still on its sprue, these are perfect test subjects, as you won't miss them once the model is built.

New on the workbench

Severn Models 7mm bicycle kit

Andy at Severn Models knows I love a challenge. Showing off his new range of etched bicycles, he explained that the 7mm version, perfect for our NG7 layout, is made up of multiple layers, and includes the clasp brakes – which he has fitted to the test model – and brake blocks - too fiddly for him it appears. The question is, am I up to adding these tiniest of details? Watch this space.

Phil Parker

Michael Russell

Tony Wright

Build a village well

If you make a wish, well, this attractive little laser-cut kit from Ancorton Models might be just the dream detail your layout needs.

1 Pre-paint all the parts, it's much easier to achieve a neat result that way. Then, stick the uprights through the two rings. I'm using Roket card glue for speed, but PVA, superglue, or even balsa cement will do just as well.

2 Both inner and outer rings of detail stones are laser-cut and etched onto thick paper. This should be rolled around a pencil and then stuck to the wooden rings. The pencil is handy for working the middle stones into place, too.

3 I open out the holes in the uprights slightly and slide the dowel through them. Some black thread is tied to this, and then wound round and round, with the occasional drop of glue to hold it in place.

4 Finally, the wooden roof and paper ridge tiles are fitted. Humbrol enamel paints used on the model were 84 (Mid Stone), 173 (Track Colour) 67 (Tank Grey) and 66 (Olive Drab).

Opening doors at Hornby

Phil Parker

ONE PROBLEM with ready-to-plant buildings is that to make them easier to mould, all the doors are firmly shut. Aside from not being particularly friendly, that's not realistic. Doors are there for a reason, to let people and vehicles into the building! Even just leaving the odd door slightly ajar gives life to a scene.

If this was a plastic kit, then a little work with a sharp knife would solve the problem, but these buildings are cast in resin, which brings with it a set of challenges.

First, if you drill, saw, or file resin, then wear a mask. Breathing in the resin dust can be harmful, so take precautions.

Next, the resin is brittle. Hit it, or try to bend it, and you end up with shattered walls. You might have found the odd knocked-off chimney when unpacking buildings in the past. Fortunately, the breaks are usually clean, and a little superglue fixes things, often without a repaint.

Finally, the walls are thick and, inside the building, usually fatter at the bottom than the top. All this makes interior detailing harder than if they were the right thickness. Not always a problem, but something to be aware of and a benefit of buying from a shop where you can examine the model before buying.

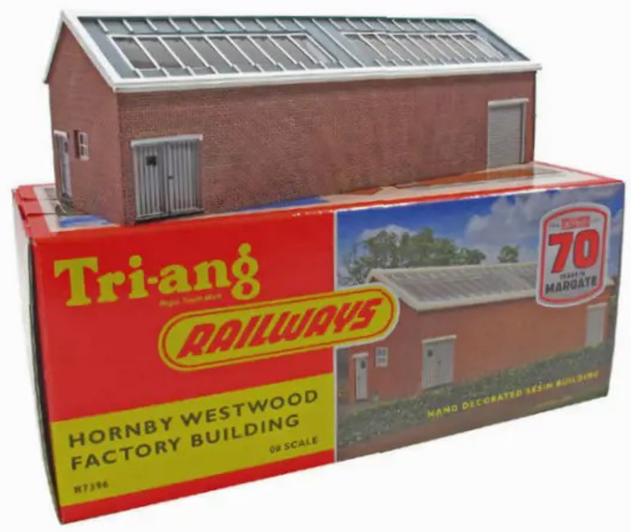
Having said all that, ready-to-plant buildings offer loads of potential for customising. Here, we are simply opening a roller shutter door. A simple project, but a step on the road to kit-bashing more buildings, making each one your own.

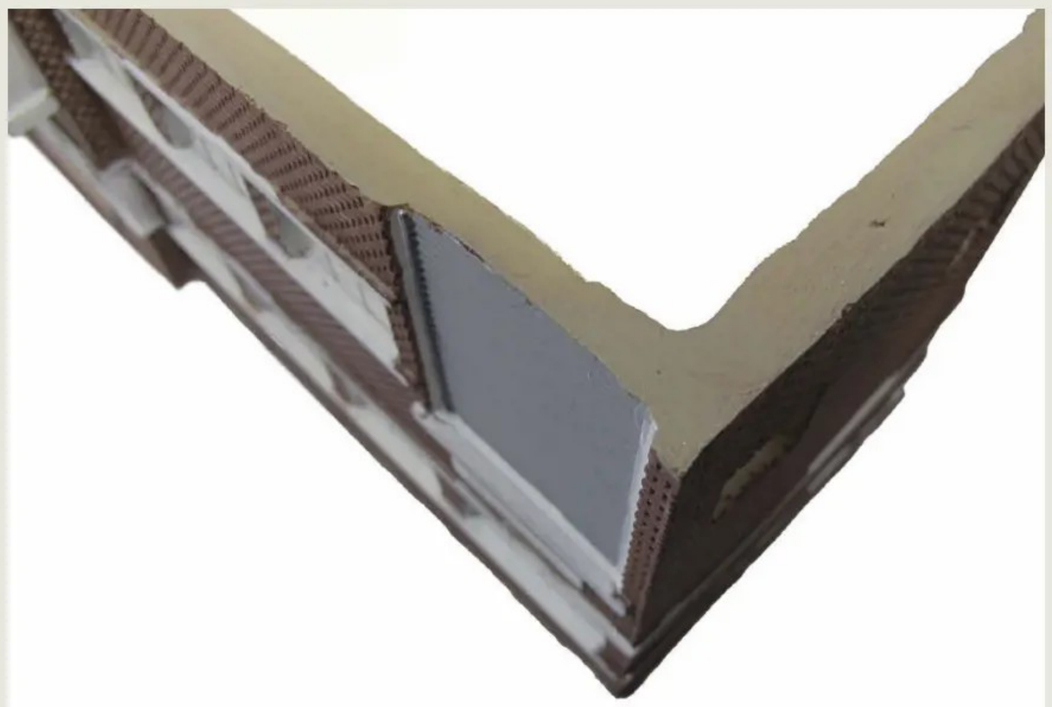
WHAT YOU NEED

Hornby
R7396, Westwood Factory Building

Humbrol
147 and 64 paint

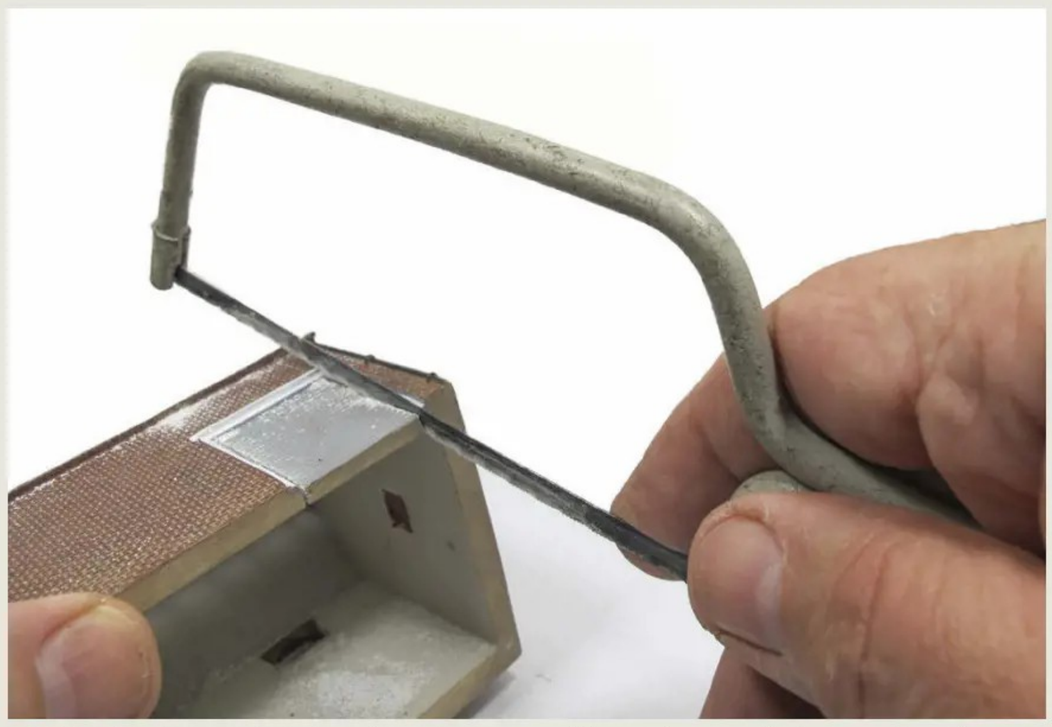
Other
Face mask, junior hacksaw, abrasive stick, small files.





1 First, check that the doors can be opened. On the R7395 Office Block, the thick walls overlap the doorway by quite a bit, so, if opened, this would need to be filed back, a horrible messy job.

2 Resin dust can dangerous if breathed in, so always wear a face mask. I prefer the filtered version used for air-brushing, but a good, well-fitting, dust mask will be fine.



3 A sharp junior hacksaw will make quick work of cutting the vertical sides. The resin is hard and will blunt saw teeth, so have spare blades to hand.

4 Rather than trying to make a horizontal cut, I carefully snap along a horizontal line lower than the top of the cut verticals. The door breaks, shattering into three pieces when I do this, showing how brittle the resin is.

5 Dust mask on, the edges are cleaned up with small, coarse files followed by an abrasive stick. The edges are touched up with Humbrol 147 for the frame and 64 for the bottom of the door.

6 Rather than fully model the interior, I happen to have a few photos of the inside of Hornby's Margate site, so stick one of them on the back wall. You can only glimpse it, so this works OK. I'll post a copy on RMweb if you want to use it.

Build a Petrol Station

Michael Russell

COMMONPLACE WITH the rise of the car after the Second World War, this petrol station is typical of those found post-WW2 and is Anglicised with stick-on BP logos. The kit contains not just the building, but a nice selection of detailing items, too.

The biggest decision to make with this kit is whether to paint it or not. It is moulded in three colours of plastic, which helps its looks, but unpainted plastic is always obvious and has a hyper-real appearance. It won't sit well amongst painted buildings, but could be satisfactory with others of its ilk. I decided to paint mine, and it helps that doing so does not hamper the window and door tolerances as they don't fit into recesses. Other parts will require masking or paint removal to fit properly.

Like all kits, it looks daunting when you first open the box and see all the parts, but it is actually quite simple and straightforward if you spend some time on familiarisation. Don't skip on this step, as you will build a better model and build it quicker once you have an idea of what is involved.

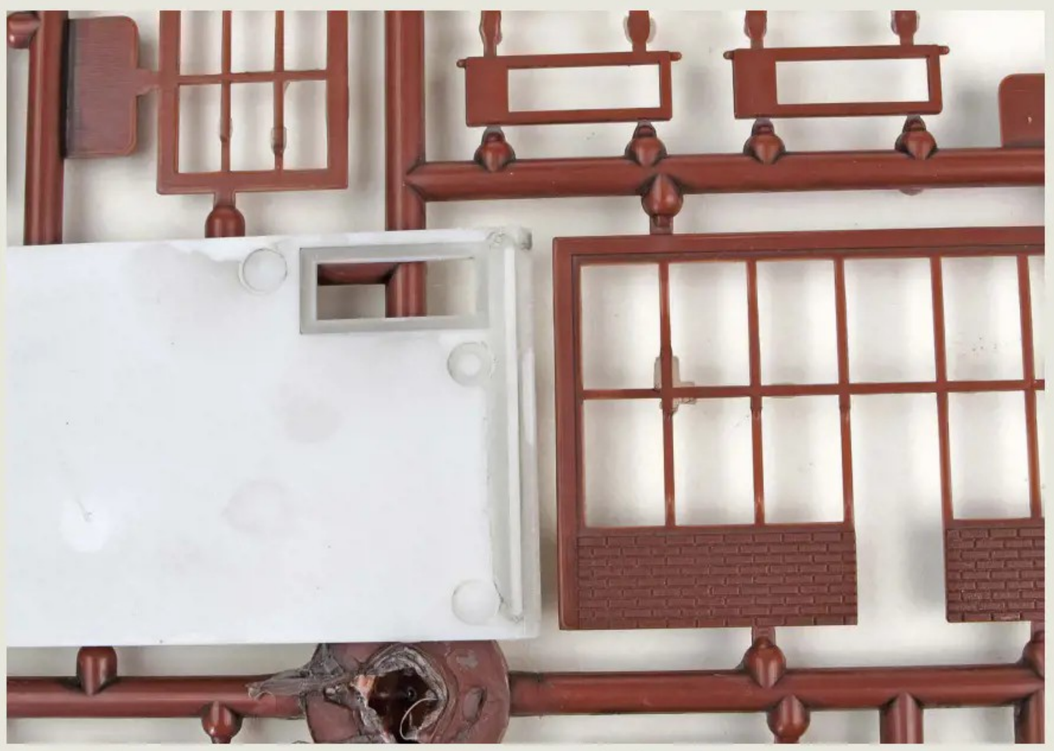
The model looks great when finished, but the interior detail is largely hidden unless you provide lighting, which the kit provides provision for. Some of the detailing is a little overscale and so you may wish to omit these, for example, the oil cans.

WHAT YOU NEED

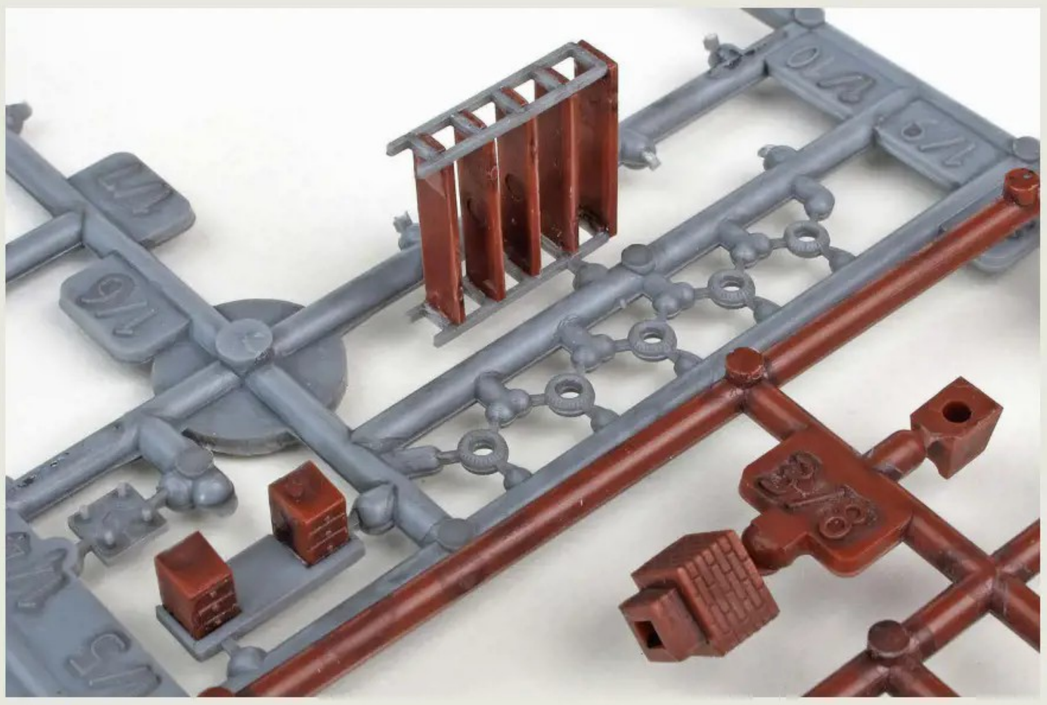
Gaugemaster
232219 Faller N Gauge Petrol Station kit

Other
Poly cement, PVA glue, superglue, soda crystals, white, red and grey primer, modelling file, modelling knife, small set square, marker pen, scissors, clean rag.

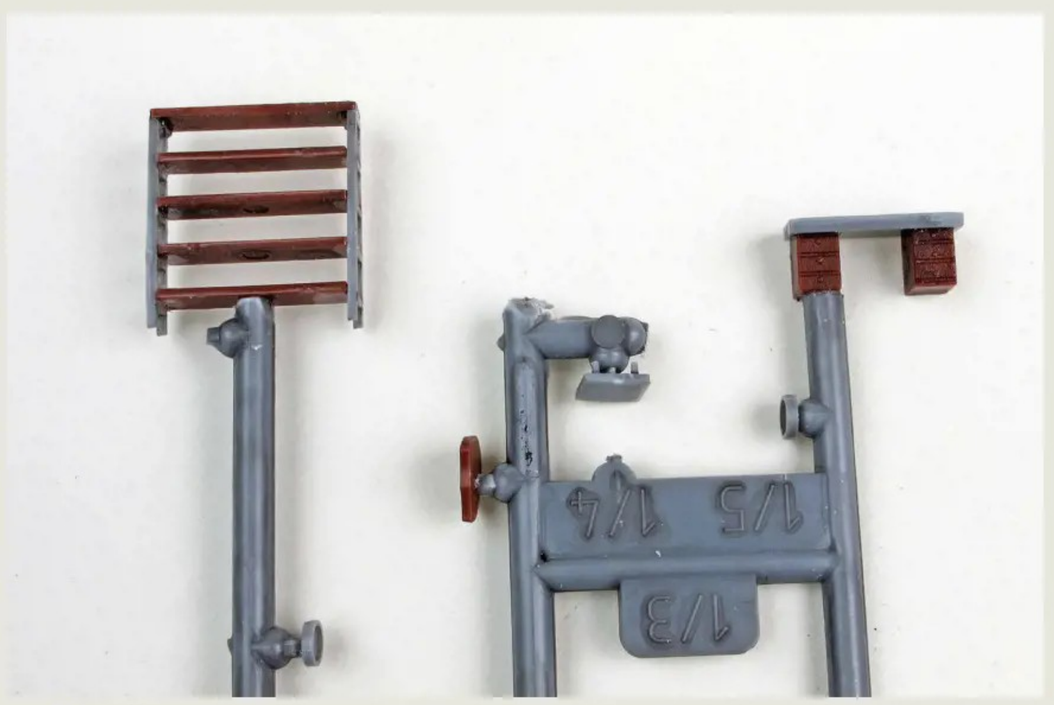
1 It is a good idea to wash plastic kits in a soda crystal solution to remove any grease and release agent. Thereafter, you should keep handling of the parts to a minimum, wash it again before painting, or wear gloves.



2 There was some flash around the window bars on my kit that I carefully filed away. There are sink/release holes on the parts, but these are in hidden areas and so they don't require attention.

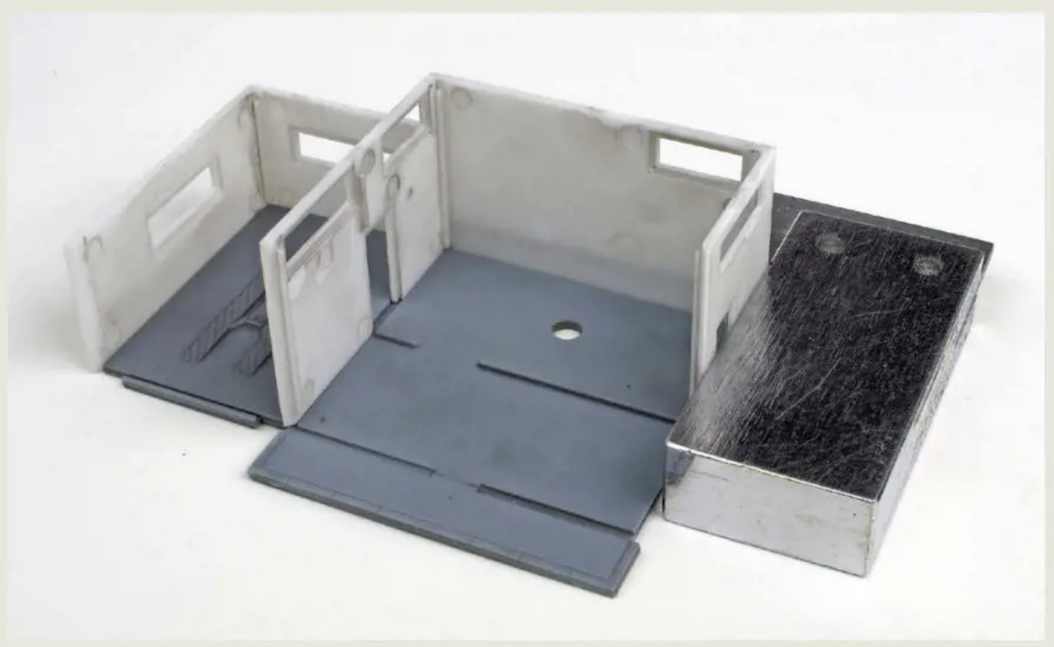


3 Many sub structures or detailing items can be built while still attached to the runners, for example, the shelves, chimney and desk amongst others. This makes construction easier and many items can be left in place on the runners for painting.



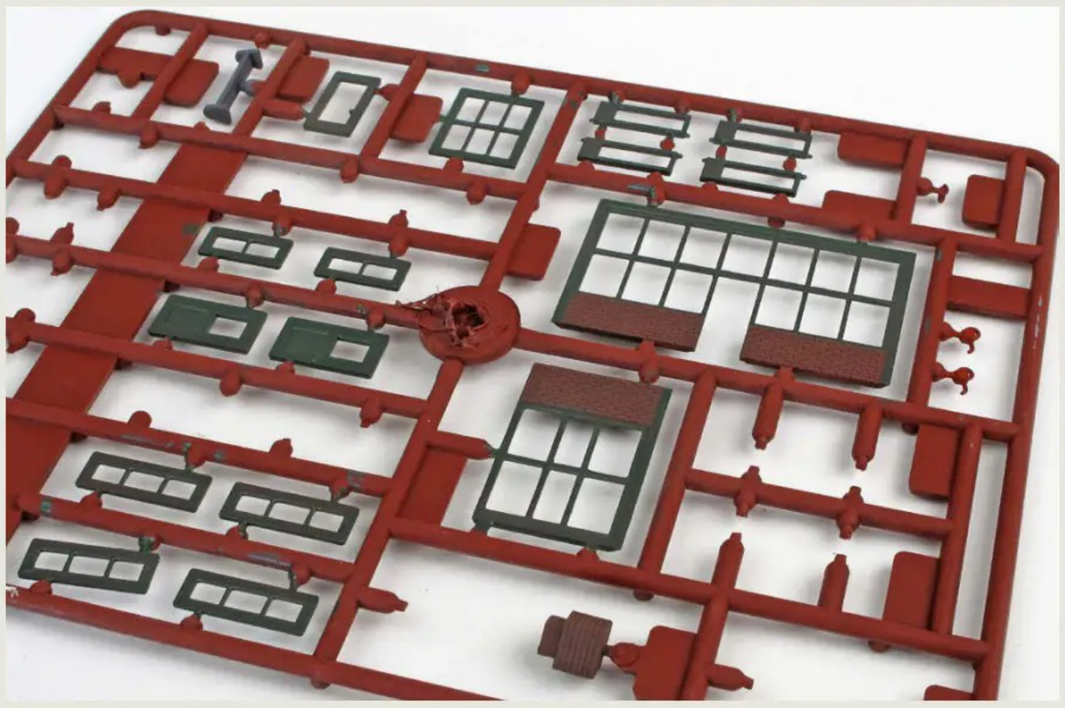
4 Other parts can be removed from the runners and then glued to a runner again at a different point to avoid having to retouch the part after painting or having to paint in two stages. Glue parts that will be painted the same colour on the same section of runner.

5 Glue the walls of the main building together without attaching to the base at the same time. The latter is used as an alignment template. Start with the two longest walls. Run a bead of glue along the seam, and it will be drawn in between.

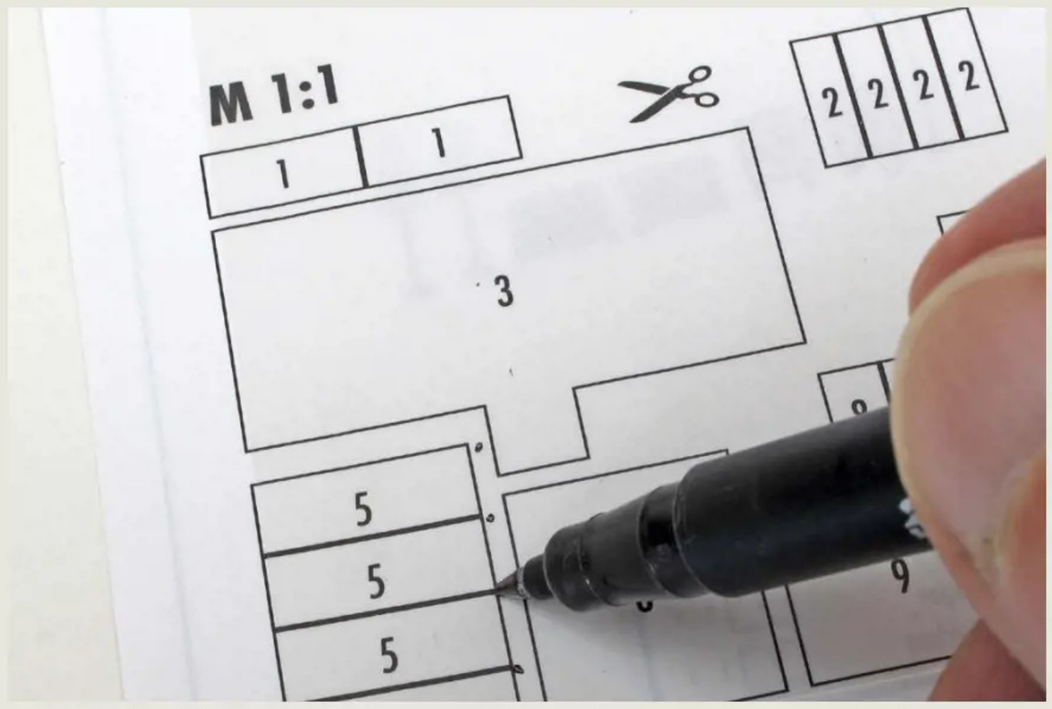


6 Continue to add walls until the white wall parts have all been used. Then, use a square to ensure squareness and to push against the seams. Make sure you take extra care not to stick the walls to the floor at this stage.

Getting Practical



7 Start painting by spraying an undercoat. I used white, red and grey depending upon what coat follows, so for brickwork, for example, I used red oxide. The windows can be hand-painted, but it is far easier to spray them and the result is better.



8 The kit includes a very handy template to help you cut the glazing out. Simply overlay the plastic sheet, add dots at the corners using a marker pen and then cut out using scissors. Stick in place with PVA glue.

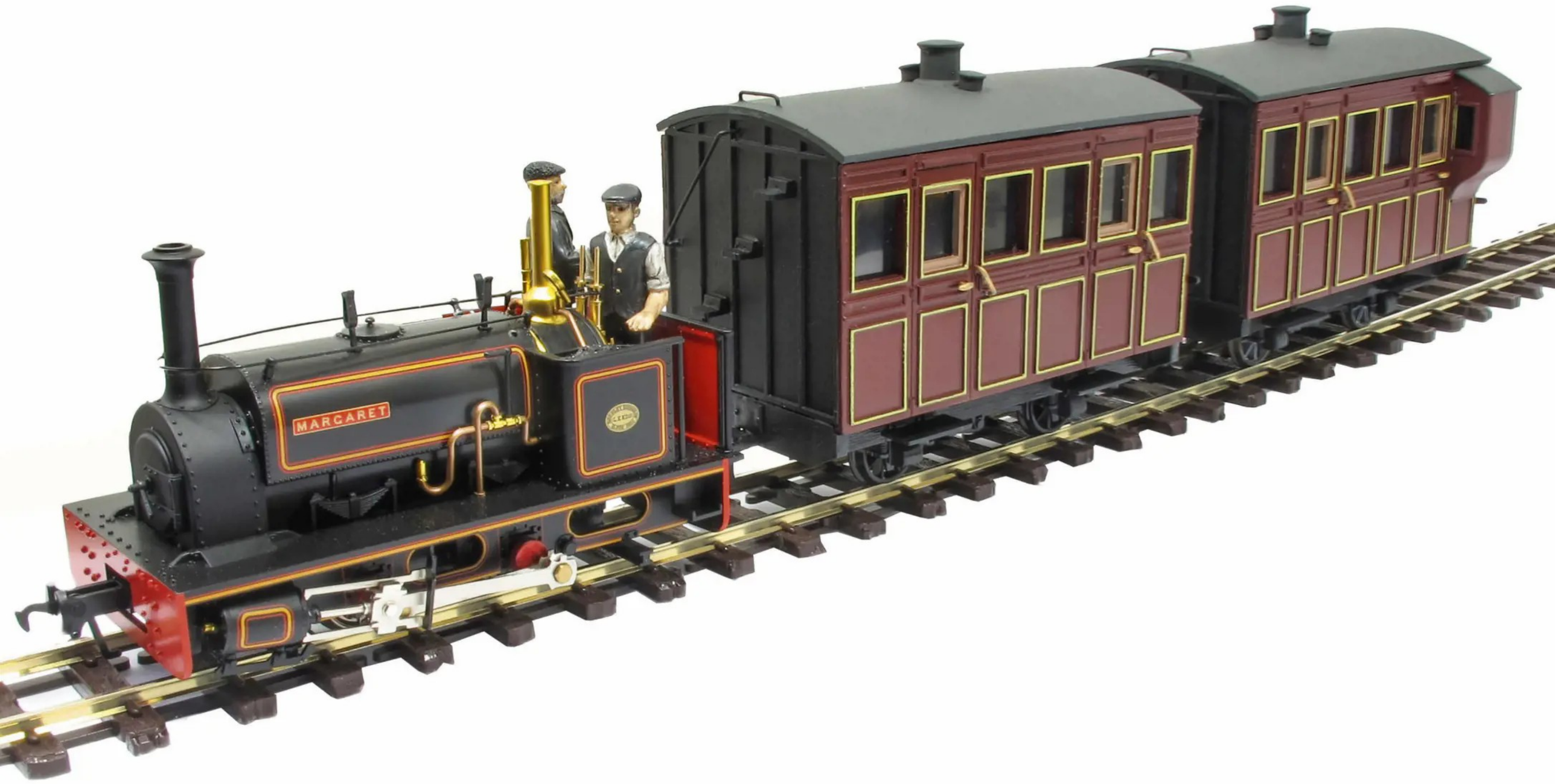
9 Make up the cardboard box insert and add the black overlays to the roof. You may not want to fit lighting now, but you may as well use the parts at this stage rather than mislay them for later. The inserts do improve the appearance of the windows, too.

10 Before you fit any windows, and especially prominent ones like the building front, give them a wipe over with a damp cloth to remove any excess or stray PVA glue marks. You wont be able to access them once fitted.

11 Use poly cement on bare plastic-to-plastic joints as this is stronger, even if it entails cleaning or scraping paint away. For painted plastic and cardboard use PVA glue. Ensure that you give the latter time to dry.

12 The stick-on posters are self-adhesive and very easy to apply, but for long-term stability, add a dab of superglue in one or two small areas. Job complete!

ALL SKILL LEVELS



Building NG7 coaches

Phil Parker

WE NEED some coaches for the NG7 project. Partly because it's a tourist line, and the owners will need a way of moving the passengers around, but mostly because I need to build a bridge over one of the fiddle yard entrances, and until I have the coaches, I won't know how big the hole will need to be!

It's always a good idea to gather your largest items of rolling stock together early on in a layout build so the clearances between tunnel mouths, bridges and lineside buildings can be checked. If you have a double-track line, make sure the widest vehicles can pass each other, too; easy to miss and difficult to resolve once the track is fixed down and ballasted.

The British-outline coaching options in 7m narrow gauge aren't exactly generous. In fact, as far as I can tell, it's the geriatric Peco "Great Little Trains" four-wheelers, or you are into etched kits. I suspect this will change, as the new Bachmann range will generate demand and no doubt will one day introduce some ready-to-run.

For the moment, though, we'll use the versatile Peco kit. It might be generic and perhaps a little slab-sided, but it has the advantage of ready-painted sides and a reasonable number of options, so not every model has to look the same. The O16.5 community has long seen these as a basis for conversions, and the instructions even explain how you could turn a couple of kits into a bogie coach.

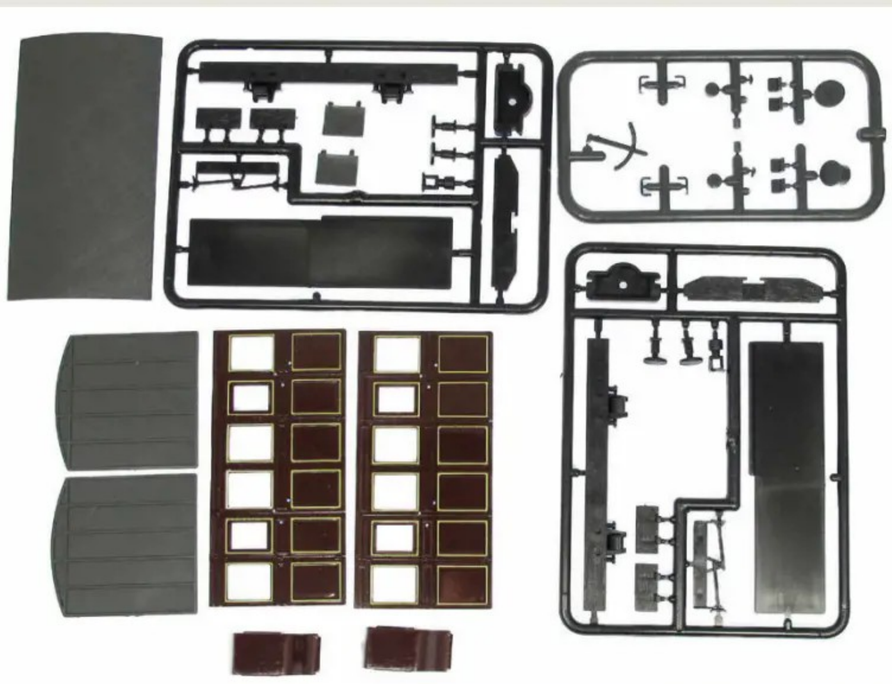
Most importantly, though, I know how big my holes in the backscene need to be!

WHAT YOU NEED

Peco
OR-31 4-wheel coach/ brake, maroon livery

Other
Sharp knife
Small pliers
Wire cutters
Tweezers
Plastic cement and solvent
Superglue
Lead flashing
Canopy glue
1mm Plastikard
Small tension-lock couplings

Getting Practical



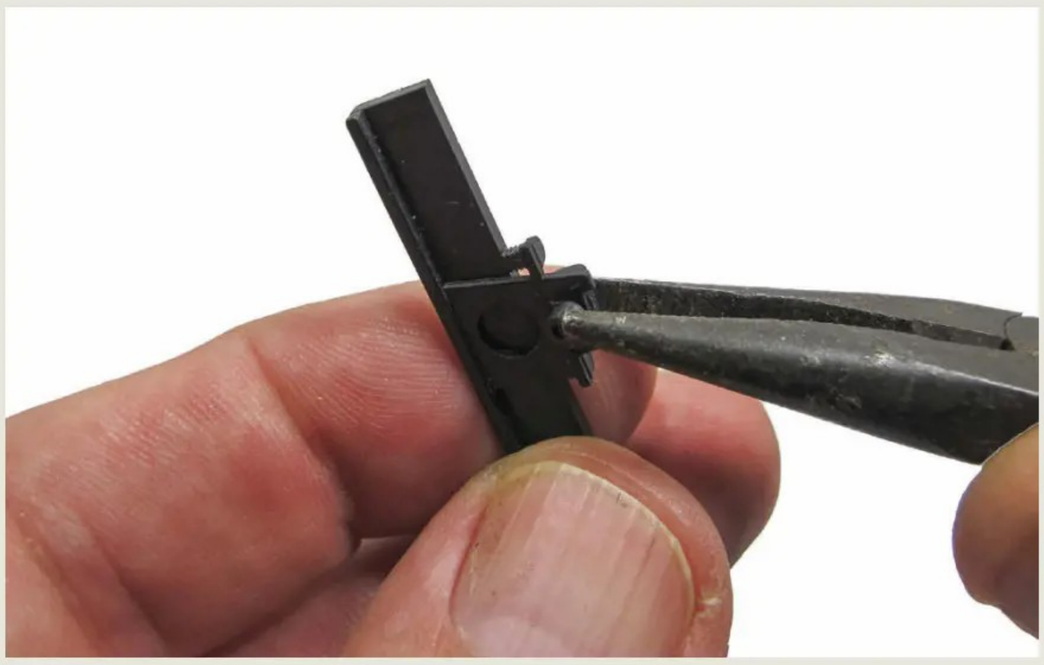
1 One nice feature of the Peco kit is that the sides arrive pre-painted and lined. I've chosen maroon, but green is also available. Obviously, there are plenty of other plastic parts that we will need to paint, including some Talyllyn Railway-style buffers if required.

2 You will notice that the ends are all identical, but they need to be drilled. Usefully, there are dimples moulded in the back, which are to be used as a guide for the steps, handrail and brake lever, making life a little easier.

3 The grab handles and door handles should be painted brass colour on the sprue. They are then fitted into the supplied holes. I make one coach a brake by fitting the ducket into the rear window; it just clips in place.

4 No interior is provided, so I cut some black Plastikard 38mm square to act as the divider. Passengers would be a nice touch, but as I don't have any to hand, I'll leave the roof loose so they can be added later.

5 Glazing material is supplied but has to be cut to size. It fits up against the ledge inside the coach, and I'm fixing it with Glue'n'Glaze, so any glue splurging out will be invisible, or at least that's the idea.



6 Nylon bearings are provided for the pinpoint axles to run in. These are a tight fit in the W-irons, and squashing them into place with small pliers will do the job. A spare is included if one pings off into the distance.

7 I fix one bufferbeam, add the solebars, and then the other bufferbeam. It all slots together. The plastic is flexible enough that the W-irons can be pushed apart to spring the axles in.

8 Before the glue dries, check that all the wheels touch the ground using a mirror. This is a hard kit to built wonky, but if there is an issue, the solebar can be levered down a fraction at one end to square things up.

9 Plastic rolling stock always needs a bit of weight adding for good running. Lead flashing from a builders' merchants is my choice – cheap and easy to cut and form. A pair of scissors is enough to trim it to shape, and superglue holds it under the floor.

10 Don't skip this step. Try the model over some pointwork on the layout. You should be able to give it a shove and have the coach run through the points smoothly without bumping or derailing.

11 Couplings are a problem. Bachmann is planning to make spares available, but they aren't on sale yet. An evening spent experimenting with different options resulted in using small tension-locks. Due to tight curves, I'm not using the hooks at the outer ends.

12 Finally, we move on to the roof. Yet again, it needs to be drilled to accept the lamp covers and handrail, which you could leave if you prefer. And there you have it, some ideal coaches for our latest layout project.

Getting Practical

The station building is an attractive sandstone structure with a wooden canopy. This is the current look under WSR ownership.

Modelling Dunster Station

Phil Parker

IF YOU visited a model railway exhibition in the 1990s, it appeared to be a legal requirement that at least one layout should be a Great Western branch line. At a really good show, there would be three or four, with at least one miniature “Ashburton”.

And then it all stopped. A branch line terminus, normally referred to as a BLT, became very unfashionable, especially Great Western Railway ones.

This is a little sad; we at BRM wonder if it’s time to put a little life back into the genre? After all, a branch line is perfect for modellers. It won’t take up too much space, and you won’t need too much in the way of rolling stock.

Thanks to Hornby, things have got even easier with the release of a ready-to-plant range of buildings covering the main structures of that classic station – Dunster.

A fine example of railway typography, greeting arrivals at Dunster Station.

ALL SKILL LEVELS

The Prototype

Opened on July 16th, 1874, by the Minehead Railway, operated by the Bristol & Exeter Railway, it was absorbed into the Great Western Railway in 1876. Built to broad gauge, it was converted to standard gauge in 1882, and expanded from single to double track in 1926 as traffic increased.

Like many branch line stations, traffic numbers were never spectacular, although the early war years saw an increase thanks to troop trains. One unusual and significant aspect of non-passenger trade was polo ponies, which would take part in competitions on the lawns of nearby Dunster Castle.

British Railways took over in 1948, and things carried on until 1964, when goods traffic was withdrawn. Passenger services lasted until 1971.

This wasn't the end, however, as Dunster is now part of the West Somerset Railway, reopening with a train hauled by Bagnall 0-6-0 *Victor* in March 1978, and can still be enjoyed thanks to their services. Being a mile from the ancient, and popular with tourists, Dunster village ensures plenty of traffic nowadays, especially as parking in the village isn't easy!

The stone station building is now Grade II listed, and the goods shed is home to the workshop for the WSR Civil Engineering Department.

The Railway Printing Company used to be based in the old parcels office within the main building. From here, it supplied tickets printed on an old Edmondson railway ticket press to the WSR and many other heritage lines.

With the main buildings still standing, anyone considering building a model would be well advised to go and take a look. Maybe you will have to use your imagination a little, but the WSR has preserved the scene as well as they can, so you can still enjoy a copper-capped steam engine arriving in the platform.

I doubt the station has changed much since GWR days. The staff would put time in to grow attractive plants around the site as they took such a pride in their work.

R7391 GWR Dunster Station, as modelled by Hornby as a ready-to-plant building. An impressive model that many would struggle to match by scratch-building.

The older plastic kit model of Dunster. Now in the Gaugemaster range, I covered it with self-adhesive resin brickwork a few years ago.

Getting Practical

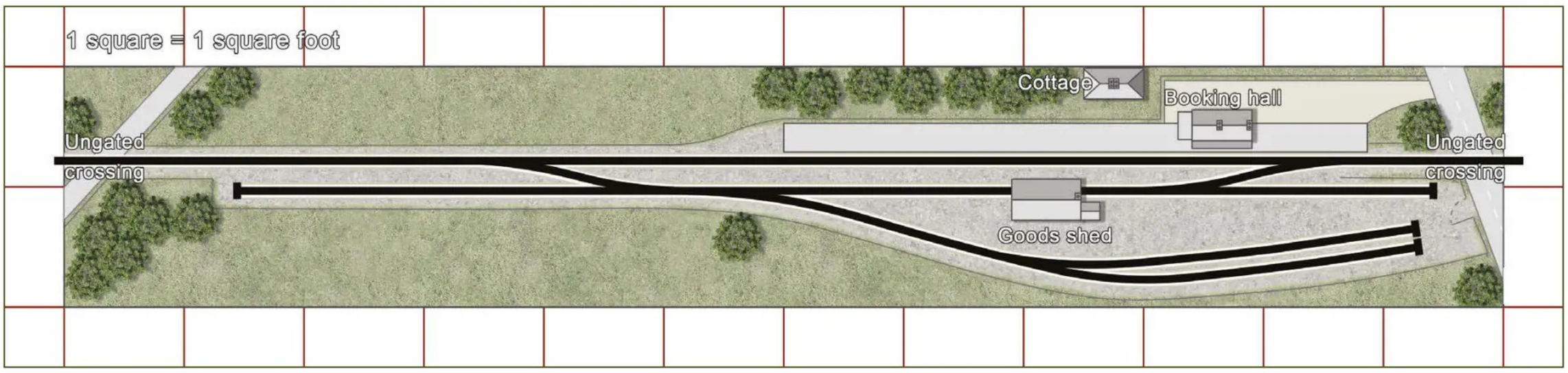
Modelling options

In this respect, OO modellers have it easy. Hornby's new resin buildings provide all the main structures for the station area. We've based a plan on the station and good shed – there is an engine shed in the range, but no evidence that Dunster actually had such a facility.

At 12ft long, plus a fiddle yard, this would make an attractive exhibition layout. It should be possible to build the model so it splits into three or four baseboards, and can be transported in a large car, along with stock and a second operator.

The scene will certainly be attractive, which would also make it a good candidate for a home-based layout, possibly the centre of a continuous run scheme, with the track extended around the edge of a suitable room.

Hornby's roadside station would benefit from opening the doors and adding some interior detail as it looks closed, straight from the box.



It's the small, carefully modelled, details that make layouts stand out from the crowd. Look at the lamp over this noticeboard. A bit of wire, with a blob of PVA on the end would represent it in OO.

If all this is too much, a little selective compression could bring it down to nine feet – take a foot out of the headshunt on the goods yard and another out of the yard itself. The final foot comes from the end of the headshunt, where you could lose the road and crossing, perhaps replacing it with a bridge to hide the exit to the yard at that end.

If you prefer not to use resin buildings, Hornby used to produce Dunster station as a plastic kit, and this can now be found in the Gaugemaster range as "Fordhampton Station". At half the price of the newer model, it would be appealing, but the wall finish is applied using stickers. These have good colours, but no relief. Back in November 2015, I built this kit, and solved this problem with Redutex textured wall finish. You are on your own with the goods shed, however.

Trains

This is where the real cost saving comes in. A branch line doesn't need a lot of rolling stock, especially engines.

Starting with the GWR period, a Prairie tank on a B-set would cover passenger duties. Another tank, or perhaps a pannier, would do for freight working. If a tender loco appeals, how about a Deans Goods, or maybe even a Manor?

Rolling stock will be four-wheel wagons, but don't forget you'll need horseboxes for all those polo ponies!

Included in the new range is this corrugated iron engine shed. It's a useful building and would fit into many settings, but as far as we can tell, the real Dunster never had a home for locomotives. Even if it did, the chances are the structure would be a lot smaller.

R7392 GWR Dunster Goods Shed by Hornby. Doors are provided with the model, but we suggest you leave them open so trains can be shunted inside.

BR wouldn't have been that much different, although the later days would see Class 117 DMUs appear, (Bachmann can help here) or try the second-hand market for a bargain (albeit much less detailed) Lima model. Any diesels will be the smaller classes, maybe a Class 25, for example.

Finally, we have the preserved area, and here all bets are off. The WSR reopened the line with an industrial tank engine in the 1970s, but you might be better off heading online to the company website and taking a look at the latest stock list: **www.west-somerset-railway.co.uk.**

What you don't need is a pile of large steam engines or diesels. Since the layout will be operated "one engine in steam", even DCC would be a luxury, unless you want sound. This could be really pleasant, perhaps added to with some birdsong or wind noises.

Inspired by the new Hornby buildings, we've come up with a simple, but workable plan for Dunster station. However, there are lots of other sites that would make just as appealing a model. Perhaps BRM readers would like to suggest some?

The goods shed, now home to the WSR permanent way department.

You won't find one of these RTR! However, ignore the digger and skip, and instead, look at the colour of that ballast. Red, rather than the traditional grey. An important detail for any model hoping to set the scene.

More details. Spear-topped fencing, Ratio kit 434 for this. The bus can be found in the EFE range. You might leave the Coronavirus signs off unless modelling the period 2020-22.

Tony Wright's Loco Projects 2024

See these locos on Tony Wright's stand at The Festival of British Railway Modelling in February!

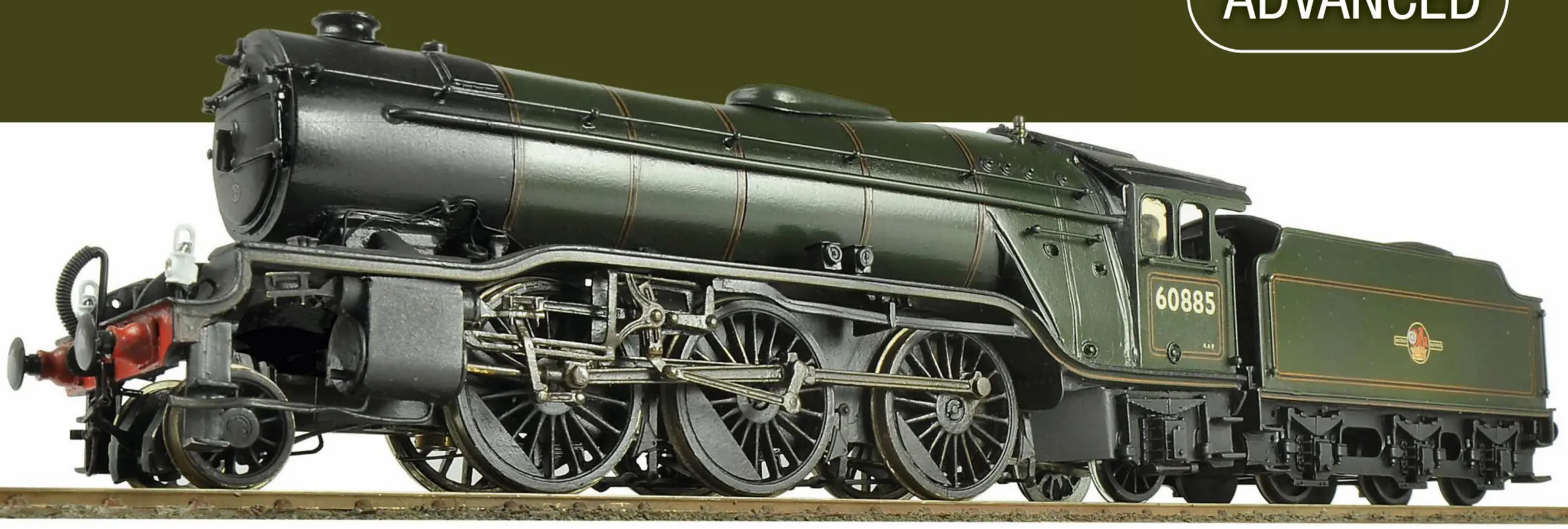
Tony Wright

I WAS delighted with the various responses to my recent BRM articles on 'Budget Modelling'. May I thank all those who've responded so enthusiastically through various forms of correspondence, please? Now, we come to something completely different! All modelling has to be done on a budget, but, whereas the articles just mentioned related to a very modest budget, what follows is on a much higher one, for obvious reasons.

The seven locos that are about to be briefly described form a selection of what I've built/had painted over the last 12 months or so. I say 'selection', because I've built several more, some in EM Gauge (those about to be described are all in OO). The first A4 and the V2 have already appeared on a video, but none of the others. Speaking of videos, there's one on World of Railways TV this month, which coincides with the publication of this article, showing these locomotives in action. What follows is certainly not a 'blow-by-blow' account of how I built the seven; just a short description of each one. For those who might be interested in seeing them all, they'll be on my demonstration stand at the Festival of British Railway Modelling in February 2025.

For those who visit shows next year, as well as at Doncaster, these locos will form part of my display at Preston and York as well.

60010 *Dominion of Canada*; built from a Pro-Scale kit and painted by Ian Rathbone. It's seen hauling 'The Flying Scotsman' northbound. It's powered by a DJH AM9 motor/gearbox. The last time I saw the full-sized loco was at Darlington in 1965 – minus its chimney!



60885; built from an old Nu-Cast kit, but fitted on top of a set of Comet frames, and powered by a DJH AM9 motor gearbox. The splendid painting is that of Ian Rathbone. This kit (bought cheaply second-hand) came with a white metal lump for a chassis – hardly conducive to good running, hence my Comet substitution.

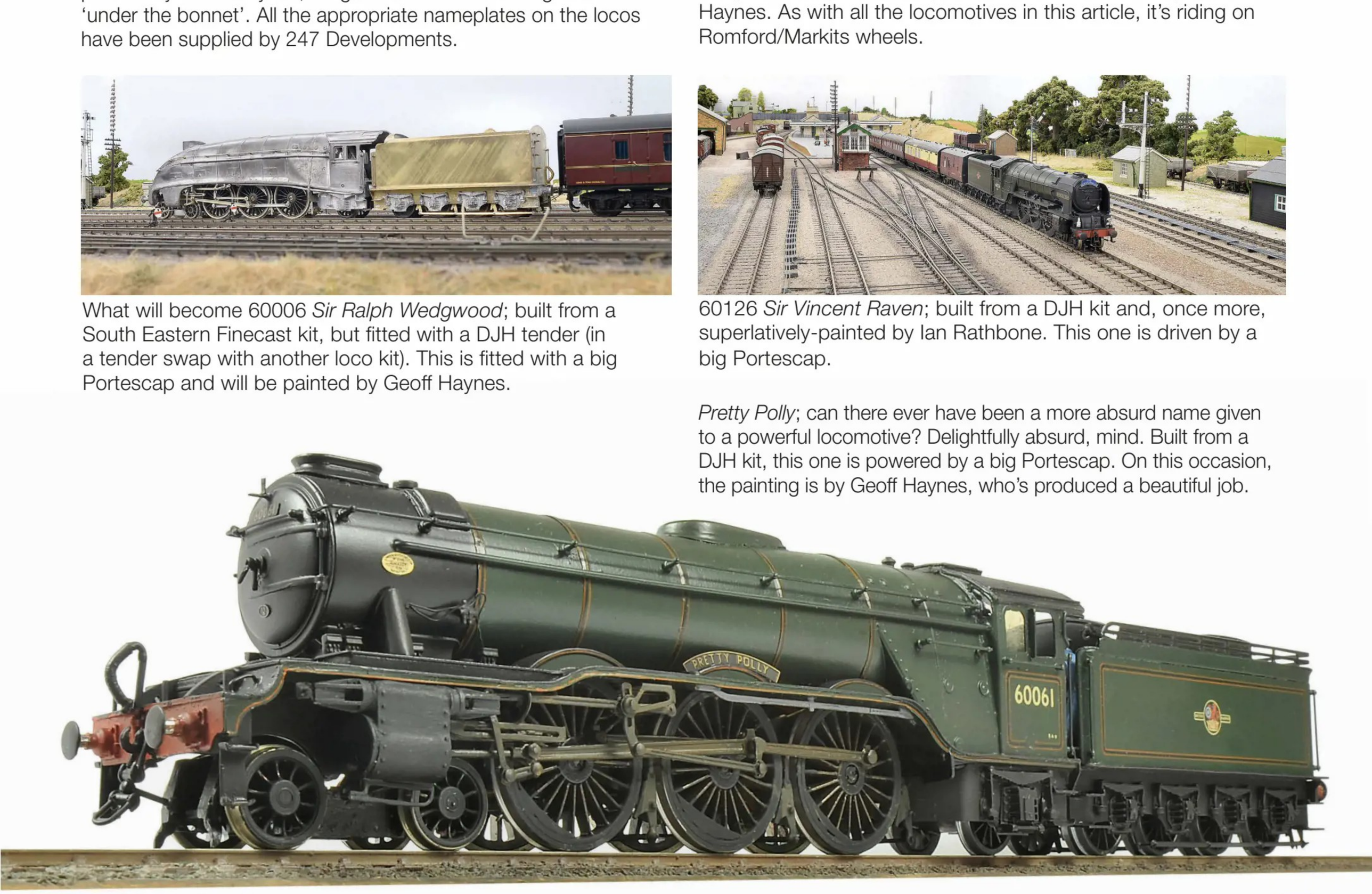
60158 *Aberdonian*; yet another A1 I've built from the DJH kit (I must have built getting on for 30 of these now!), and superbly-painted by Geoff Haynes; it's got a DJH AM9 motor/gearbox 'under the bonnet'. All the appropriate nameplates on the locos have been supplied by 247 Developments.

What will become 73157 (one of a trio of such locos at Top Shed, 34A, in the '50s); built from a DJH kit, and powered by a big Portescap. It will be painted in BR lined black by Geoff Haynes. As with all the locomotives in this article, it's riding on Romford/Markits wheels.

What will become 60006 *Sir Ralph Wedgwood*; built from a South Eastern Finecast kit, but fitted with a DJH tender (in a tender swap with another loco kit). This is fitted with a big Portescap and will be painted by Geoff Haynes.

60126 *Sir Vincent Raven*; built from a DJH kit and, once more, superlatively-painted by Ian Rathbone. This one is driven by a big Portescap.

Pretty Polly; can there ever have been a more absurd name given to a powerful locomotive? Delightfully absurd, mind. Built from a DJH kit, this one is powered by a big Portescap. On this occasion, the painting is by Geoff Haynes, who's produced a beautiful job.



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The life of Class 02s

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A small batch of 20 short-wheelbase 0-4-0 diesel hydraulic shunters were built by the Yorkshire Engine Co. for British Railways, but only lasted 15 years. However, as several moved to industrial use, the fleet has a fascinating history.

Shunting wagons and coaches with steam locos was a costly and time-consuming operation, especially in terms of preparing locos for the work, so it was no surprise shunters were one of the first diesel locos that were pursued by the 'Big Four' in the 1930s and 1940s when replacing steam became an aspiration.

The initial trials by the GWR, SR, LMS and LNER led to various designs being developed, and by nationalisation, BR was in a position to order a mix of different diesel shunters.

While, over time, BR settled on two key designs – the standard large shunter (the Class 08/09s), and the standard small shunter (the Class 03/04), there were many variations within a theme between the two designs.

However, there were some jobs these standard design locos were not suitable for, especially dock and harbour lines and this led to specific orders for other types: the Class 02, 06 and 07 were examples.

The fleet of 20 Yorkshire Engine diesel hydraulic locos were a prime example of a bespoke loco being ordered for a specific role. The locos, which went on to become the Class 02 under the TOPS system, were to replace Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway 0-4-0 saddle tank locos that operated in Merseyside and Manchester.

These steam locos were old – they dated from 1890 – so were ripe for replacement. But the work they did could not be undertaken by the 03s or 08s as they were 0-6-0s with a longer wheelbase, which meant they could not negotiate some of the tight docks lines. However, Yorkshire Engine's 0-4-0 design could.

Two orders

The order for the 20 locos was made in the late 1950s and construction was undertaken at Yorkshire Engine's Sheffield works. They featured a 6-cylinder 170hp Rolls Royce C6 engine.

D2860 and 08911 are giving brake van rides at the National Railway Museum in York on March 9th, 2013.

The locos' appearance was very attractive with a spacious cab but also, unlike most other designs, they had a veranda next to the cab at No. 2 end allowing a shunter easy access to and from the loco during their shunting duties. The access to the cab was via one door at the end, and there were no side cab doors. At the front, they also had wide steps that train crew could ride on.

Their wheelbase was just 6ft, which on a 22ft-long loco was impressive. They could negotiate a curve of just a single chain. For comparison, Classes 03, 04, or 07 were able to negotiate a curve of two chains and Classes 08 and 09, three chains.

The locos, numbered D2850-69, were built in two batches of 10. D2850-59 were delivered between October 1960 and January 1961 while the second batch came off the production line between September and December 1961, numbered D2860-69.

D2850 was sent to 27A (Bank Hall, Liverpool) on October 10th, 1960, followed by D2851/52/54-57/66-69, while D2853 went to 9A (Manchester Longsight), 2858 to 26A (Newton Heath, Manchester), D2859 to 17B (Burton-on-Trent), D2860-63 to 24F (Fleetwood) and D2864/65 to 8B (Warrington Dallam).

Reallocations over the years saw the locos remain concentrated mainly in the Merseyside and Manchester areas, with examples allocated from time to time to 6A (Chester Midland), 8C (Speke Junction), 8K (Aintree), 10D (Lostock Hall) and 26B (Agecroft) while other reallocations were simply because the depot codes changed; for example, Bank Hall became 8J, Newton Heath became 9D, Fleetwood became 10C and Burton-on-Trent was later recoded 16F.

The locos moved around depots in the North West and could be seen as station pilots at the likes of Liverpool Exchange and Preston while also being used to shunt at yards like Speke.

An interesting development was when D2859/65 were moved to 50D (Goole) for use in the nearby dock lines in July 1967. These locos would remain there until they were withdrawn three years later.

In May 1968, the first locos moved to 8J, Allerton, with D2850-57/60/67 all moving there. This would be the final depot to have an allocation of the locos.

The Class 02s

Words & photography: Pip Dunn

Withdrawals

The Beeching report dramatically changed the face of the railways and, as well as swathes of line closures, there was a change to freight operations at a time when road haulage was beginning to blossom. This seriously affected the shunter fleet for British Railways.

The first locos to be withdrawn were the unsuccessful types, the pre-BR designs and the non-standard machines. The Class 02s were certainly non-standard, but then they were built for a specific role. When those roles started to be eliminated, then the fleet was doomed.

Two locos were stored in May 1969, D2863/69, followed by D2862 two months later and D2868 in September but they were not formally condemned until December of that year along with D2861. Three locos were condemned in February 1970 – D2854/58/64/66 while the two Goole-based locos, D2859/65 followed the following month. Other 1970 withdrawals were D2850 in June, D2867 in September, D2855 in October and D2860 in December. April 1971 saw D2857 laid up.

Four locos, however, lingered on at Allerton, and were allocated TOPS numbers – 02001-004 for D2851-53/56. In the event, D2852, due to become 02002, was withdrawn in October 1973 so did not gain its new five-digit number. However, D2856 became 02004 on February 5th, 1974, D2853 became 02003 in May 1974 and finally D2851 became 02001 in October 1974.

These three stragglers remained in traffic until withdrawn on June 1st, 1975, although some had long periods either officially stored or simply not in use.

Disposals and redeployment

While the Class 02s did marginally better in the longevity stakes compared with many other early, short production run, shunter designs, with that trio lasting long enough to get TOPS numbers, the most interesting period of their lives was after BR.

D2850/55/64 were all sold for scrap to W Heselwood of Sheffield and broken up in 1971 while D2859 was sold to Birds. D2861 went to CF Booth and D2863/69 to TW Ward of Beighton, Sheffield for scrap, with these locos broken up in 1971, in May (D2859/61) and August (D2863/69).

One of the last four BR locos, D2852 – the loco allocated the 02002 number that was never applied – was scrapped on-site at Allerton by Avon Transmissions in March 1976. By that time, it had been heavily robbed of parts to keep its three surviving classmates in traffic.

Of the final trio, 02001 was also sold for scrap and disposed of by Arnott Young of Bradford in March 1976. That left 11 locos, with 10 being sold to industrial users. The exception was D2860, withdrawn in December 1970, being claimed by the National Railway Museum. Not only did it allow the museum to have an example of a private loco builder's shunter design, it also gave the fledgling museum a useful tool for shunting exhibits. It was claimed by the NRM in 1973 and, with the York site not then open, it was moved to Preston Park at Brighton in March 1973 and did not move back to its native county until November 1977.

In 1970, the first locos were sold to industrial users. D2854 went to CF Booth at Rotherham in August, but the loco wasn't scrapped, and was revived to act as a yard shunter and used by the Yorkshire scrap dealer until May 1988, so it amassed 18 years in use – nearly double what it achieved in BR days!

Also moving on in 1970 was D2858, which was sold for use at Hutchinson Estate & Dock Co at Widnes Harbour in August.

In September 1978, D2858 was sold to Fison's Fertlisers, also in Widnes, but in March 1981, the loco was on the move again, this time to Lowton Metals at Newton-le-Willows, which kept the loco until December 1986. It then moved to Butterley Engineering, where it remained in use until June 2002.

D2866 went to WH Arnott at Dalmuir in Scotland and remained there until October 1987. D2867 went to Tunnel Cement at Pen-y-fford. It was actually hired to Tunnel Cement for a month before being withdrawn and then sold by BR to the company. It stayed in North Wales for only two months, as in October 1970, it moved to the Redland Roadstone railhead at Mountsorrel in Leicestershire, where it embarked on an impressive 25-year career shunting heavy stone trains. In September 1975, it was joined by 02004 (D2856), but the latter was only for spares for its classmate and was slowly stripped until scrapped on-site in October 1978 by Vic Berry.

D2854 is seen at Rowsley on September 22nd, 2007.

D2853, together with 03901 and 07012, are seen at Frodingham shed on April 18th, 2015.

Loco	TOPS No.	new	withdrawn	industrial use	disposal	current location
D2850		8/10/60 27A	20/6/70 AN	n/a	scrapped 06/71 W Heselwood Sheffield	
D2851	02001	8/10/60 27A	1/6/75 AN	n/a	scrapped 03/76 Arnott Young Bradford	
D2852	allocated 02002, not applied	15/10/60 27A	14/10/73 AN	n/a	scrapped 03/76 Avon Transmissions at Allerton MPD	
D2853	02003	29/10/60 9A	1/6/75 AN	LCP fuels, Shut End 11/75-4/97	Preserved	Barrow Hill
D2854		5/11/60 27A	28/2/70 AN	CF Booth, Rotherham 8/70-5/88	Preserved	Peak Rail
D2855		26/11/60 27A	4/10/70 AN	n/a	scrapped 06/71 W Heselwood Sheffield	
D2856	02004	3/12/60 27A	1/6/75 AN	Redland, Mountsorrel 9/75-10/78 (only used as a source of spare parts)	scrapped 10/78 on site by Vic Berry	
D2857		17/12/60 27A	18/4/71 AN	Birds, Long Marston 1971-85	scrapped 06/95 Bird Group Long Marston	
D2858		24/12/60 26A	28/2/70 NH	Widnes Harbour 8/70-9/78; Fison's Fertiliser 9/78-3/81; Lowton Metals Haydock 3/81-12/86; Butterley Engineering 12/86-6/02	Preserved	Butterley
D2859		31/12/60 17B	15/3/70 GO	n/a	scrapped 04/71 Bird Group Long Marston	
D2860		16/9/61 24F	13/12/70 AN	Preston Park 3/73-11/77; NRM York 11/77; Thomas Hill Kilnhurst (for overhaul 9/78-1/79); NRM 1/79	Preserved	NRM York
D2861		14/10/61 24F	14/12/69 LH	n/a	scrapped 05/71 CF Booth Rotherham	
D2862		14/10/61 24F	7/69 LH	NCB Norton Colliery, 1/71-9/71; NCB Chatterley Whitfield Colliery 9/71-10/71; NCB Norton Colliery, 10/71-4/79;	scrapped 4/79 NCB Norton Colliery	
D2863		21/10/61 24F	5/69 LH	n/a	scrapped 08/71 TW Ward Beighton	
D2864		28/10/61 8B	28/2/70 NH	n/a	scrapped 04/71 W Heselwood Sheffield	
D2865		11/11/61 8B	15/3/70 GO	APCM Kilvington 9/70-xx/84 Blue Circle, Beeston xx/84-12/84 (for store)	scrapped 5/85 V Berry Leicester	
D2866		11/11/61 27A	28/2/70 NH	WH Arnott Dalmuir 8/70-10/87	Preserved Caledonian Railway 10/87-1/96	Peak Rail
D2867		18/11/61 27A	12/9/70 CH	Tunnel Cement, Pennyford 8/70-10/70; Redland Mountsorrel 10/70-3/95	Preserved	Battlefield Line
D2868		2/12/61 27A	9/69 LH	LCP fuels, Shut End 10/70-4/97	Preserved	Barrow Hill
D2869		9/12/61 27A	5/69 NH	n/a	scrapped 08/71 TW Ward Beighton	

2854 is at Rowsley on September 26th, 2009.

D2865 went to Associated Portland Cement Manufacturers at Kilvington on the Bottesford to Newark line. APCM later morphed into Blue Circle Cement. In December 1984 this loco moved to Vic Berry's yard and was scrapped the following May.

In 1971, D2862 was taken on by the National Coal Board, the only Class 02 it took (although it took plenty of Class 03/04/08/11/14s). It moved to Norton Colliery in Staffordshire in January 1971, but in September, it was loaned to Chatterley Whitfield Colliery for three weeks before returning to Norton in October and it remained there until April 1979, when it was scrapped on site.

D2857 also moved to industrial use. It was taken by Birds Commercials Motors at Long Marston and remained in use until 1985 and was scrapped on-site in June 1992.

D2868 went to Lunt, Comley & Pitt Fuels at Shut End, Pensnett, in the West Midlands in October 1970 and was joined by 02003 in November 1975. Both were worked until April 1997.

Preservation

The fact so many Class 02s enjoyed lengthy spells in industry meant they survived long enough to be snapped up for preservation, and today, of the 20 locos built, seven remain.

As well as the NRM's D2860, preserved at Barrow Hill are D2853/68. D2854/66 are at Peak Rail while D2858 is at the Midland Railway Butterley and D2867 is at the Battlefield Line. Some locos have moved around; for example, D2866 was at the Caledonian Railway from October 1987 to January 1996. Most of these locos are operational and have been put to work.

Liveries

Locos were delivered in all over British Railways green with yellow and black wasp stripes at both ends. These wrapped round the side of the nose end slightly. Buffer beams were red and the BR lion and wheel emblems were applied on the cab sides above the numbers. Coupling rods were also red.

As far as is known, no locos lost their D prefixes. The three renumbered locos had their TOPS numbers applied higher up in the place the BR badge was previously. No locos were ever repainted out of green in their BR days. The locos usually got so dirty the red buffer beams were soon black in appearance!

In industrial days, however, there were some interesting livery variations. LCP's D2853 and D2868 were initially painted in a light blue and D2853 was named *Peter* and D2868 was named *Sam*. Later, D2853 was repainted in a blue, not too dissimilar to BR blue and had red buffer beams and LCP logos and branding on the cab side. There is no evidence to suggest D2868 received the same livery.

D2854, which was used by CF Booth to shunt stock at its Rotherham Yard, retained its BR livery but had its number removed (although still visible) and had a red 'Rolls Royce Genuine Parts' sticker on its cab side for a period!

D2857 was repainted with a red body and a grey cab with Bird Group branding applied to its cab side. D2858 was repainted into a red livery while at Fisons and later a similar oxide red at Lowton Metals.

The National Coal Board's D2862 was repainted into a light blue with wasp stripes on its buffer beams. On its cab sides, it had NCB, then 'Staffordshire Area' underneath it in uppercase, No. ND3 with the number 63/000/359 below that. It also had red tail lights and white headlights fitted on either side of the bonnet in line with the top of the front radiator grille, while on the cab, the same light arrangements were fitted under the cab windows with an additional third light to the left of the top of the cab end door.

Pictures of D2865 at Kilvington are rare, and the only one found in researching this article was in black and white, so it's not clear what colours it was carrying, but it was certainly repainted from its British Railways green. D2866 at WH Arnott at Dalmuir was painted in all over light yellow with red buffer beams and thinner wasp stripes and renumbered AY1021.

Redland's D2867 was painted in all-over light green with red buffer beams and wasp stripes retained. It later had Redland branding on its bonnet and the name *Diane* – in capitals - on the cab side. It bore no number or any identity as to its BR number.

In preservation, those locos that have been restored have generally worn their original and traditional BR green, although D2867 had a spell still in its Redland livery.

It started as a perfectly normal day, a photography day trip by train to Scotland, destination Dundee: what could possibly go wrong? I had done the trip to enjoy the Class 27s on the Edinburgh to Dundee services on numerous occasions in recent years – 'The Circuit' as it was known by bashers. Now I was concentrating on my photography and recording the scene before it disappeared forever, as it was doing at a gathering pace. Now, I know what you're thinking, that this is going to be a tale of some loco failure farce that ruined the day, or enhanced it depending on the rescuing traction. Oh no, things were going to get much, much worse than that.

Wednesday, August 1st, 1984, was forecast to be fine countrywide and found me at Doncaster station boarding the first daytime service to York, the 07:04 DMU calling intermediately at Selby. You forget nowadays how relatively sparse the service was even on major Anglo-Scottish main lines, compared to the intensive timetables post-privatisation. Unless you did an overnight service, the earliest you could arrive in Edinburgh from Doncaster in those days was 10:44, an hour and a quarter later than is possible today. And coming home was the same, with the last departure being the 18:35 HST off Waverley, a full hour earlier than today. The DMU connected at York with 1S11 07:30 Leeds to Edinburgh HST. If you wanted to be there earlier, you were going to be dossing down on 1S08 00:05 Kings Cross to Edinburgh, off Doncaster at 03:32, then waiting in Newcastle for an hour before it formed an 'all shacks' service into Scotland for a 09:00 arrival. As a result, 1S11 was a popular service with day trippers.

I sat in the front of the DMU rattling along the ECML and enjoyed the view as the mist started to burn off the low-lying fields. It was going to be a lovely summer day. The Selby Diversion had opened the previous year, so we now reversed at Selby to pick up the new main line at Hambleton, and I swapped ends along with the driver. There was only an eight-minute connection at York, the platform was already busy with passengers, and when the HST arrived it was clear that getting a window seat was going to be a challenge, so I decided to stand in a vestibule and see if it thinned out a bit later. 43114 was at the front of the set and 43112 was at the rear.

I was still standing after the Durham stop, on the right-hand side in direction of travel, and it was just a normal HST journey on a route I had travelled innumerable times. That is until we got to Ouston Junction, just south of Tyne Yard, when we did something very unusual: we came off the Down Main onto the Down Slow line, which took you round the west side of Tyne Yard and onto track I had never done before. The line speed was quite slow and we trundled along on the jointed track.

Scotland Or Bust

By Andrew K Overton

The leading portion of 1S11 07:30 Leeds to Edinburgh at Tyne Yard on August 1st, 1984. A first-class passenger looks out as the train crew confers. ANDREW K OVERTON

BR staff stroll nonchalantly around, hands in pockets, as passengers extricate themselves from the rear portion of derailed 1S11 on August 1st, 1984, unassisted. Not BR's finest hour of customer service. ANDREW K OVERTON

It was always quite difficult seeing locos in Tyne Yard from the main lines due to the Up Arrival line being in the way on a descending flyover, so I was looking forward to what I could see from this unusual route on the other side of the yard.

Suddenly, there was a jolt and the ride became very rough. Within a few seconds, I was certain that we were off the road. I couldn't see anything untoward through the window on my side, so I decided to cross to the other side of the vestibule to have a look out of the opposite window, but I was still none the wiser, so decided to cross back again. I had only taken a few steps when the floor started to become a wall and I was thrown on my back against the external door. To my right, the sky appeared where previously there had been the interconnecting gangway between the coaches. Yes, we were definitely off the road and now on our side. I realised in that moment that there was a very real chance of me being thrown out of the open gangway and grabbed hold of the bar across the external door. After no more than a few seconds of noise and confusion, everything stopped moving and relative silence descended.

Fight or flight is a natural human instinct and, as there was nothing to fight, I was getting out of there as quickly as possible. My camera bag and rucksack had joined me during our career down the embankment into some rough ground adjoining the railway, so I grabbed my stuff and climbed out of the vestibule end. My initial panic caused me to start running but, after a few paces, I came to my senses and realised I had nowhere to run to, so I might as well wait for help where I was.

After a minute or two more, with no sign of other passengers getting out of the train, I walked back and climbed into the vestibule and could see that people were trapped because the power-operated sliding door into the carriage wouldn't open, as no-one was able to stand on the floor-activated pressure pad because the floor was now the wall. I had seen guards turn the door power off using the isolating toggle switch in the vestibule end, so I flicked that off and helped those inside to manually-open the door and wedge it open with a suitcase so people could climb out.

27005 on 2L36 11:18 Edinburgh to Dundee passes Metro-Cammell Class 101 DMU set 320 on the Forth Bridge on August 16th, 1984. The DMU is working the 2G45 11:10 Cowdenbeath to Edinburgh service. ANDREW K OVERTON

The next coach behind mine had also gone down the embankment but wasn't completely on its side, so people were starting to make their own way out of that one now. With nothing more for me to do, I climbed back out, gathered up my stuff, and scrambled up the embankment onto the trackbed to survey the scene,

1S11 was in two halves: 43114, two First Opens (FO) and a Restaurant Unclassified Buffet (RUB) had stopped just beyond the scene of destruction and only the RUB was derailed, with the rear end tilting on the edge of the embankment. Behind was a gap of about a coach and a half before the first Second Open (SO) coach, the one I had been travelling in, was to be found completely on its side at the foot of the embankment at an angle of around 30 degrees to the railway. The next SO had detached from that one and had come to a stop at right angles to the railway, with the trailing end teetering above the Down Slow, detached from its bogie, and the leading end at the foot of the embankment close to the vestibule of the first SO. The next SO was still up on the railway at an angle of around 30 degrees to the track, displaced at the leading end. The rest of the train was derailed, in line, with the track beneath it, and a pile of destroyed permanent way behind 43112. I had come to take photos, so what was I waiting for? Out came my camera and I got a few shots.

Having taken my photos, I sat around with the other passengers waiting for the railway to do something with us. By this time, the emergency services had arrived on the scene and had taken over with medics checking people over and sending those needing treatment off in ambulances. I thought I was alright, physically I certainly was, but the ambulance crew weren't that sure and suspected I might be suffering from shock, so I was bundled into an ambulance too, to Queen Elizabeth Hospital at Gateshead. After getting checked over, they decided I was alright. Those fit to travel were taken to Newcastle station and BR didn't seem to know what to do with

27005 hauls 2L36 11:18 Edinburgh to Dundee onto the Tay Bridge at Tay Bridge South on August 16th, 1984. ANDREW K OVERTON

47442 awaits departure from Aberdeen platform 3 with 1C89 15:45 Aberdeen to Carstairs TPO on August 16th, 1984. ANDREW K OVERTON

Aberdeen station pilot 08680 has just shunted the ECS off 1A31 11:25 Glasgow Queen Street to Aberdeen into platform 6 and is now running out at the south end of the station before the train loco rejoins. Clayhills carriage sidings are to the right. August 16th, 1984. ANDREW K OVERTON

us, so after sitting around for a while with not much happening, I excused myself and went onto the platform to make my own way home. There was no point carrying on to Scotland today as it was now early afternoon. You have to chuckle in these changed times that, even though our names and addresses had been taken, I never even received a letter of apology from BR for a ruined day, never mind any offer of compensation like a replacement ticket!

Editor: *The train had been diverted from the Down Main to the Down Slow line at Ouston Junction due to locomotive movements to replace a failed locomotive on an Up passenger train, which necessitated occupying both the Up and Down Main lines. The official accident report states that 25 passengers were conveyed to Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Gateshead, three of whom suffered serious injuries and had to be detained. All the other passengers were taken to the canteen of the Durham Chemical Company until they could be conveyed to Newcastle by buses. The accident report can be read here: https://www.railwaysarchive.co.uk/documents/MoT_Birtley1984.pdf*

A second attempt

No doubt today, I would be offered counselling for the trauma endured, but in those days we just got on with life, so a fortnight later, I was repeating the journey, this time without the add-on Mark 3 fairground ride. An on-time arrival at Edinburgh dropped me nicely into the next loco-hauled Dundee service, 2L36 11:18 to Dundee. The Dundee to Edinburgh trains had originally been DMU-operated, with loco-hauled coaching stock (LCHS) and Class 27s working between Dundee and Glasgow Queen Street. By 1981, the age of the units was leading to such unreliability that from the October timetable change, they were replaced by LCHS, with DMUs replacing the LCHS on the less frequent stopping services on the Dundee to Glasgow route. Initially, Class 27s predominated, although Class 47 incursions could always occur, but as the years went on, Class 47s ousted the Type 2s to an increasing degree, although never totally. By the date of my photographic foray, it was getting close to being a toss of the coin which would appear, but today I was in luck as 27005 was tip-topping away at the head of the stock in platform 17 bay.

The plan for the day was fluid, but as the weather was rather overcast, I decided to keep on the move and reserve a day of pure photography for when the light was better. In the days when sticking a camera out of an open droplight wasn't viewed as utter madness, I decided to get a few shots as we passed over the spectacular Forth and Tay bridges. We set off with the usual 6LDA thrash, which was repeated at the many intermediate stations that made a trip along the Fife Coast with these small Sulzers such a delight, retained long in the memory and sadly missed.

Unfortunately, the heat-cycling associated with this stop/start running did nothing for the reliability of the locos, with some failures leading to outrageous freight loco assistance over the years. There was usually interest to see en route, too, with freight workings from the Fife coalfield and numerous sidings generating trip traffic. From Cupar onwards, modern signalling was left behind and semaphores reigned. Traditional railway, traditional traffic, traditional traction, now all part of our past.

The mid-morning arrival in the Scottish capital restricted how far north you could get if you wanted to be back home the same day, too. Inverness was out of the question but Aberdeen was possible out of the move I had made. So, on arrival at Dundee, I made the nine-minute connection into 1A31 11:25 Glasgow Queen Street to Aberdeen to make my furthest trip north so far. It would be a few years before I made it to Wick.

27033 shunts out of Dundee Tay Bridge station after arrival with 2L36 11:18 Edinburgh to Dundee on October 23rd, 1984. Its train has been shunted into the adjacent bay platform to the left. Dundee West Goods is on the embankment to the right, note the new track work at its base, part of the Dundee re-signalling and remodelling of 1985.
ANDREW K OVERTON

27033 heads out of Dundee and onto the Tay Bridge with 2G62 13:28 Dundee to Edinburgh on October 23rd, 1984. ANDREW K OVERTON

As the 18:35 HST departure from Edinburgh actually started from Aberdeen at 16:00, my 14:10 arrival at the Granite City gave me a bit of time for a leg stretch and some photography on the station, but not a great deal else. 1A31 terminated in one of the south-facing bay platforms and the station pilot came on the rear to shunt release the loco, placing the coaches in through platform 6 to form 1T42 15:05 departure back to Glasgow Queen Street. At this date, these services had not gone over to push-pull operation with Class 47/7s.

Also seen during my flying visit was the Aberdeen portion of the Up West Coast TPO, which ran as 1C89 departing at 15:45 for Carstairs, where it joined the rest of the train from Glasgow. Up until the early 1980s, it had been a solid Class 26 turn but was now a Class 47. This was a most interesting working, conveying passengers between Dundee and Perth and departing the former at 17:10, but unadvertised in the passenger timetable. Until closure in 1967, it ran to Perth via Strathmore and was then diverted via Dundee. It did not call in the usual Dundee side platform 1 at Perth but rather ran through without stopping, then reversed back into platform 4 on the Highland side of the station, which was better for GPO vehicular access. Here, the passenger coaches were detached before it departed for Carstairs and this stock formed part of 1A03 01:05 Perth to Aberdeen several hours later, which was also the back working for 1C89's loco after it had returned from Carstairs. 1A03 also included passenger stock and vans off 1N05 23:30 Glasgow Queen Street to Inverness and 1P04 23:06 Edinburgh to Perth (which also had an Inverness portion). It also propelled out of the Highland side of the station at Perth before departing towards Dundee.

Having still not recorded the Dundee scene, which had provided me with many happy bashing memories, it wasn't long before I returned, as re-signalling was in the air and everything was due to be modernised. The new signal box at Dundee would open on March 17th, 1985, so, with installation work evident on the ground, I found myself at Tay Bridge station on a cold but sunny October 23rd, 1984, having arrived courtesy of

27007 heads a train of Catfish and Dogfish ballast wagons away from Buckingham Junction at Dundee towards Perth at 14:05 on October 23rd, 1984. Dundee West MPD can be seen above the loco. New cable troughing associated with the upcoming re-signalling scheme can be seen. ANDREW K OVERTON

47610 emerges from Dock Street Tunnel into Dundee Tay Bridge station with 1T35 13:25 Aberdeen to Glasgow Queen Street, running 25 minutes late on October 23rd, 1984. Dundee Tay Bridge East signal box is squeezed in between the wall and the bridge to the right. ANDREW K OVERTON

Toton's 47364 is a long way from home at Dundee Tay Bridge station on October 23rd, 1984, as it passes through with 4V37 Aberdeen FLT to Gushetfaulds FLT. The signal above the loco is located in the higher-level goods yard south of the station. ANDREW K OVERTON

2L36 again, this time with 27033. It always seemed to be cold at Dundee and could be bitter in winter, with a lazy wind – one that couldn't be bothered to go round you so cut through you – blowing off the Firth of Tay. The terminating services on 'The Circuit' were routed into one of the west-facing bay platforms, and the station pilot, in the form of a Class 08, would drop on the back to shunt release the train loco. If you secreted yourself in a toilet, you could get the '350' for haulage. Once the stock had been shunted into the opposite bay, the train loco would run out, the pilot would be taken off the stock and then the train loco backed on the coaches to form the next Edinburgh service. These shunts went on numerous times every day. After taking photos of this manoeuvre, I left the station to photograph the departure back to Edinburgh at 13:28 from Riverside Drive, which runs along the north bank of the Firth of Tay and underneath the Tay Bridge as it curves round to the south.

Vantage points were also available nearby on the line to Perth, close to Dundee West MPD, which had another three years before closure at this time. In common with most Scottish Region depots, I had always found a ready welcome when asking politely to look around and was never refused, merely being told to be careful and let the foreman know when I was done. On this weekday occasion, there was nothing of interest on shed, so I made my way back to the station without bothering them; weekends were a better bet for stabled locos.

Tay Bridge station was still busy with passing freight at this time, although the docks branch had closed in 1982. This had been accessed through the goods yard at a higher level than the station on its south side; Dundee West Yard was at a similar elevation on the north side of the station and a Freightliner terminal was located there, connected to the Perth lines. A lot of traffic was generated at Aberdeen and the Freightliner terminal there was still operational, which by the mid-1980s could produce 47/3s, once rare in the area. Camperdown Junction to the north had a Blue Circle Cement terminal and there were operational goods yards at Arbroath and Montrose, the latter generating inward agricultural lime traffic from Thrislington in PTA tipplers. With the exception of cement to Aberdeen, all of this traffic was to be lost. Photography at the east end of Tay Bridge station was very difficult in pre-digital days, as the line disappeared into Dock Street Tunnel, but with several overbridges intervening across the stone-faced cutting, giving extremes of light and deep shadow. Pity the poor signalman who spent his shift at that end of the station staring at the walls and breathing in confined diesel fumes. Even the rest of the station could be challenging due to its narrow location surrounded by high retaining walls, especially in the harsh, low autumnal light. Thankfully, I persevered and captured some images recording the traffic that has now disappeared.

By 1985, Class 47s had taken over the majority of the workings on The Circuit and, by the end of summer 1986, loco-hauled travel on these diagrams had largely ceased, as the sanitisation of the railway by 'Sprinterisation' gathered pace. It was all over bar the reading of the last rites. Not that I had planned on risking my life to get the photos but, as it turned out, it was all worth it.

Eastfield's no-heat 37149 waits for the road at Dundee Tay Bridge station with a freight from the north at 15:25 on October 23rd, 1984. ANDREW K OVERTON

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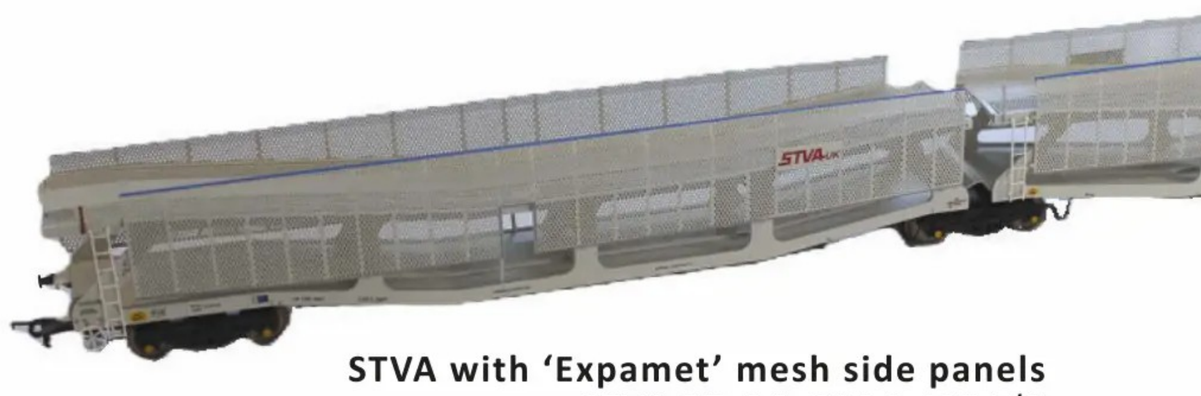

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The three-mile-long branch line from Llandudno Junction to Llandudno was opened in 1858 and contributed to the growth of Llandudno as the major holiday resort on the North Wales coast. The branch diverged from the main Chester to Holyhead line at the junction and has one intermediate station at Deganwy.

Photos by Gavin Morrison

Metro Cammell unit No.101677 (51496 & 51179) is seen leaving Llandudno Junction working the 17:27 Blaenau Ffestiniog to Llandudno on May 28th, 1997. Conwy Castle is in the background, with the rail and road bridges over the River Conwy in front of it. The line to Holyhead diverges to the left, with the Llandudno branch to the right.

For a time in the 1980s, Class 33s were regular visitors to the North Wales coast. Here, 33032 is seen in Llandudno station awaiting departure with the 17:40 to Crewe on September 19th, 1986. The '33' had arrived earlier with the 12:00 from Cardiff.

40131 passes Deganwy station at the head of the Saturdays-only 13:53 Llandudno to York on July 24th, 1982.

This overall view shows the once extensive nature of the terminus at Llandudno, which was needed to cater for the large numbers of visitors to the resort. Note the wide expanse of the centre island platform, allowing easy access for road vehicles. On Saturday, August 20th, 1986, two expresses are being prepared for departure. On the left is 45119 with the 09:27 to Newcastle while 47540 is at the head of the 09:39 to Euston.

25126 is approaching Deganwy station with the Saturdays-only Llandudno to Nottingham train on July 10th, 1981.

On July 24th, 1983, 31439, in Regional Railways livery, rounds the sharp curve into Llandudno Junction off the branch from Llandudno with the Saturdays-only 1F77 16:35 from Llandudno to Liverpool Lime Street.

37421 is seen with the 07:05 from Birmingham New Street to Llandudno as it runs alongside the shore of the River Conwy at Deganwy on July 31st, 1993.

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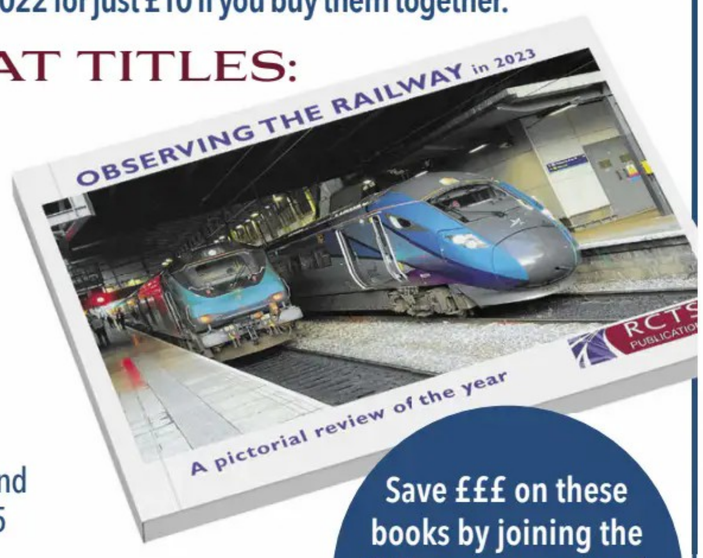

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Classic Wagons - The 'Mendips PGAs'

By David Ratcliffe

Class 56 No. 56040 leaves Merehead Quarry with a loaded train destined for Theale in April 1986. The first and fourth wagons date from 1980, having channel solebars and their body-strengthening ribs fitted to the outside rather than the inside of the hopper, unlike the earlier PGAs. In addition, all but the leading wagon now carry the revised Yeoman livery with the top part of the side painted blue.
DAVID RATCLIFFE

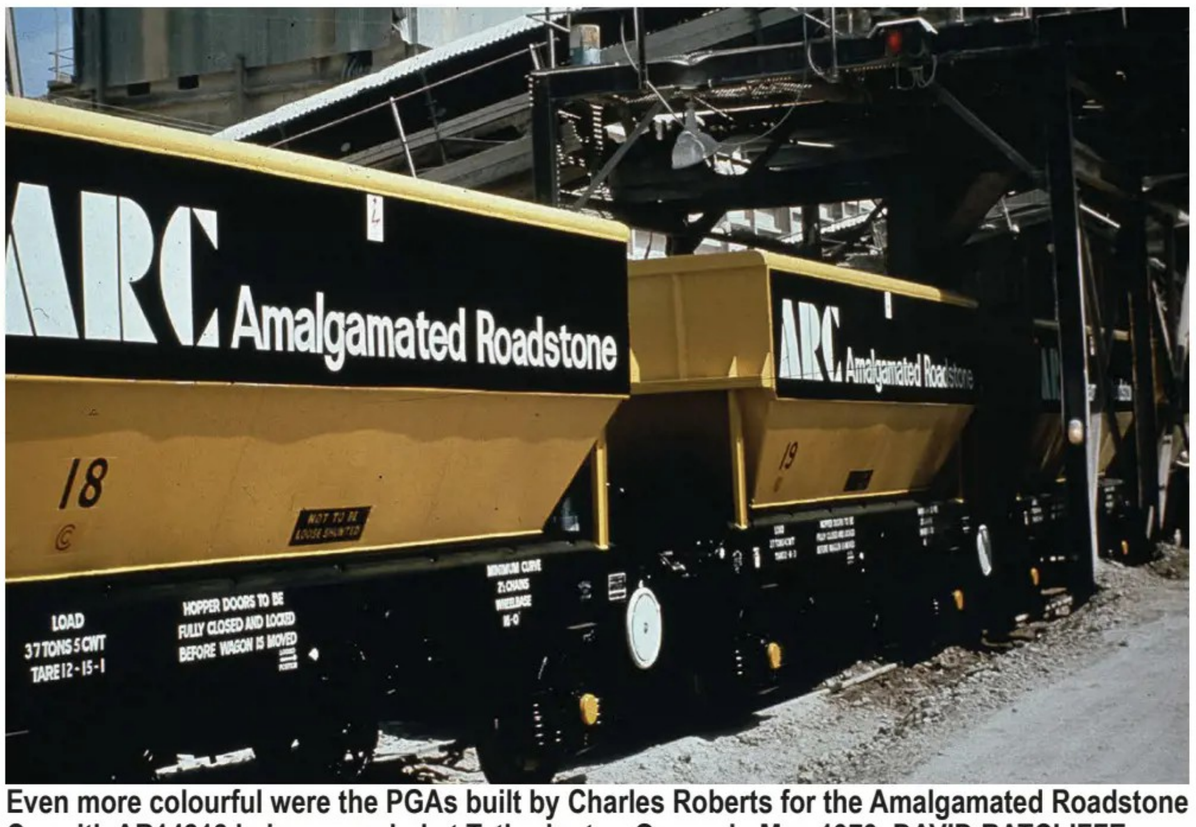
A pleasing characteristic of the 'Mendips PGAs' was their cheerful liveries. PR14033, pictured at Merehead Quarry in April 1981, was one of a batch of 71 built by the Standard Wagon Co. with English Steel pedestal suspension in 1972 for lease to Foster Yeoman. DAVID RATCLIFFE

Aggregates have been a long-standing business for Britain's railways, although it was not until the early-1970s that this traffic began the expansion that makes it one of the cornerstones of today's railfreight industry.

This expansion was driven by the need to supply stone for the motorway building programme on which the country had embarked, as well as to meet the demand generated by an unprecedented investment in new commercial property construction, particularly in London and the South East of England, with the quarrying firms Amalgamated Roadstone Co. (ARC, later renamed Amey Roadstone) and Foster Yeoman, who had previously used rail on a small local scale, beginning to forward considerable tonnages from their quarries in the Mendip Hills to destinations across southern England.

At first, the trains carrying this new traffic were formed of redundant, BR-owned, former iron ore tippler wagons and coal hoppers, but they were old and of limited capacity. Consequently, ARC decided to invest in its own fleet of 64 new 51 tonne glw PGA two axle air-braked hopper wagons, numbered AR14201-64, which were built by Charles Roberts between 1972 and 1974.

The new vehicles, which were fitted with BSC friction pedestal suspension and could carry an impressive 37.5 tonnes, immediately began working from the ARC quarries at Tytherington, north of Bristol, and Whatley, near Frome, to the company's new stone terminals at Totton, outside Southampton, and Wolverton in Buckinghamshire. Usually running in block trains of up to two dozen wagons, this proved to be such a success that by the end of the decade, ARC had leased over an additional hundred PGAs from BRTE and Procor, while in addition they had opening further stone storage and distribution terminals at Ardingley, Ashford, Maidstone, Theale and West Drayton.



Even more colourful were the PGAs built by Charles Roberts for the Amalgamated Roadstone Co, with AR14218 being recorded at Tytherington Quarry in May 1973. DAVID RATCLIFFE

As ARC and Foster Yeoman expanded their PGA fleets, a number of design modifications were introduced on later wagons, including the use of channel solebars, the repositioning of the body support ribs and a switch to Gloucester pedestal suspension. Newly-built PR14333 waits to leave the Procor (formerly Charles Roberts) works at Horbury Junction on its delivery journey to Merehead in April 1980. DAVID RATCLIFFE

Following its name change, ARC had its PGA fleet repainted in a new mustard and grey livery. This livery was also applied to its leased wagons, including BRT14649, one of a batch of 27 built by the Standard Wagon Co. in 1974, and recorded at Whatley in September 1981. TREVOR MANN COLLECTION

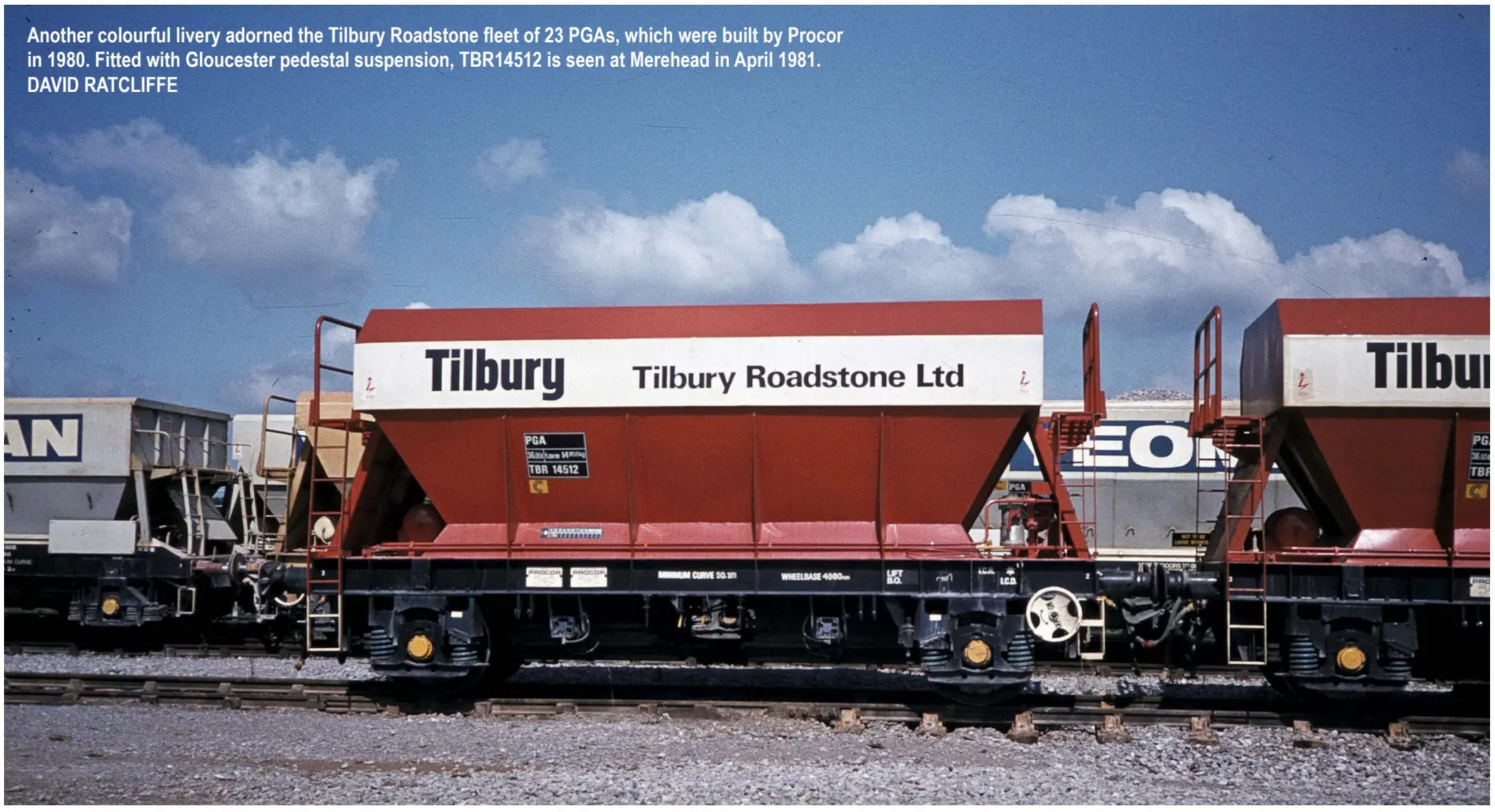
From May 1983, stone trains from the Mendips were diagrammed for Class 56 haulage, with an unidentified example being recorded near West Grinstead with a Merehead to Eastleigh working in June 1983. TREVOR MANN COLLECTION

Many of later PGAs leased by ARC had an angled top body side to reduce the amount of stone dust blown out of the wagons when in motion. Built by Procor in 1979, PR14313 awaits repair at Whatley in September 1981. TREVOR MANN

To mitigate the loss of product when loaded with the finer grades of stone, Foster Yeoman had initially fitted some of its first PGAs with extensions to the top of the body, as seen in this undated view of PR14038 and others taken at Westbury. However, after a few years, these 'Top-Skips', as they were known, were removed. TREVOR MANN COLLECTION

Class 56 No. 56046 powers an empty Yeoman train through Sonning Cutting in June 1983. The two Tarmac hoppers at the front of the train had been stopped for repair at Hays & Harlington earlier in the week and are now hitching a lift back to the Mendips.
TREVOR MANN COLLECTION

Another colourful livery adorned the Tilbury Roadstone fleet of 23 PGAs, which were built by Procor in 1980. Fitted with Gloucester pedestal suspension, TBR14512 is seen at Merehead in April 1981.
DAVID RATCLIFFE



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The other major rail customer in the Mendips was Foster Yeoman, who since the 1920s had used rail to supply stone to the local market in Somerset and Wiltshire. Like ARC, the early 1970s saw Foster Yeoman invest in new air braked PGA hoppers, this coinciding with the opening of a new rapid-loading gantry at its Merehead Quarry, and by the end of the decade, the company was dispatching over three million tons of limestone a year to its own stone terminals at Acton, Botley, Eastleigh, Theale and Wooton Bassett.

In addition, Tarmac PGA hopper wagons could also regularly be seen carrying stone from the Mendips during the 1970s and 1980s, with block train workings from both Frome West and Whatley to the Tarmac terminals at Hay & Harlington, in west London, and at Hothfield, near Ashford, the latter having been opened to supply stone for the building of the M20 motorway.

Furthermore, the small fleet of Tilbury Roadstone PGAs, built primarily to carry granite from Mountsorrel in Leicestershire to the Tilbury terminal at Barham, in Suffolk, would also appear at Merehead from time to time to be loaded with limestone for Barham. The 1980s also saw these wagons occasionally being utilised to supply one of the Yeoman terminals, as well as working alongside ARC and Tarmac hoppers in services from Frome and Whatley to Ardingley and Hothfield, as well as to the Redland Aggregates depot at Bat & Ball, which had been opened to supply construction material for the M25 Motorway and the A21 Tonbridge Bypass.

For several years during the 1980s, trains from Whatley would occasionally include PGAs from more than one quarrying company. Class 56 No. 56033 heads a long consist, comprising Tarmac, Tilbury Roadstone, and ARC wagons, bound for Hothfield in summer 1986.
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BRONTE COUNTRY

The Yorkshire Dales was a hub of activity in the early 1900s, providing plenty of inspiration for David Butcher to base his new model on, being finally tempted by a reservoir construction railway.

Words: David Butcher **Photography:** Phil Parker

Loco No 1, one of my Bachman Porter conversions, pushes a rake of wooden-bodied side tippers onto the gantry with loads of clay for the dam foundation trench. This type of wagon was universal with contractors from the early days of railways into the twentieth century when steel-bodied v tippers came into use

FACTFILE

NAME: Withins

SCALE/GAUGE: O Narrow Gauge/7mm gauge/16.5

SIZE: 5ft x 2ft

ERA/REGION: Early 1900s Edwardian/West Yorkshire Pennines

LAYOUT TYPE: Continuous run

I didn't have the idea for 'Withins' from the outset, only that it would be a 7mm narrow gauge railway that would have a continuous run, passing loop and a siding or two, plus it had to fit in our small hatchback car, hoping it would be invited to exhibitions.

The inspiration for the theme of the layout came after the baseboard was built and the basic trackplan laid. The original idea was a (might-have-been) narrow gauge light railway in the Yorkshire Dales, serving the lead mining industry. I was working toward this when, as I was browsing the books in my local model shop, I came across a book by Harold Bowtell, one of a six-book series published by him under the title of *Reservoir Builders In The Age of Steam*.

This was the light bulb moment. Here was all the information to create something different in model form. A reservoir construction railway of which there had been several in Yorkshire for prototype inspiration. All I had to do was make the idea fit the layout to incorporate the main element required, which was a valley to build a dam across. A lot of mocking up with blocks of insulation board resulted in what you see now.

LEFT: The loco appearing from under the concrete mixer platform is a resin body kit from Smallbrook Studios. Its 'Hero' model fits on a Dapol B4 tank engine chassis; these are excellent slow runners.

BELOW: The steam crane on the gantry was a feature of reservoir construction sites, transferring materials from the different levels. This model is a kit-bash of the Dapol dock crane with a 00 tank wagon body for the boiler.

> "There were, with one or two exceptions, no tunnels on these lines. So, the track has to disappear under structures and between buildings."

Not the ideal way to plan a model railway, but I don't think it would have been much different planning it all from the beginning, sticking to the original size and trackplan. The layout name 'Withins' is taken from an area of moorland on the Yorkshire Pennines near Haworth, known to most as Bronte Country, which has a few reservoirs serving both sides of the Pennines. I think the name means "White shallow valley" in old English.

Creating the scene

The baseboard was constructed of 9mm ply deck with three-inch deep framing underneath, with a built-in backboard and sides to support the scenery. The sides were cut down to the profile of the scenery, opening up the viewing angles but still giving strength and support. It is a little heavy, and for any future builds I would use 6mm ply. Track is Peco O16.5, pinned and glued on a cork trackbed with care not to kink or have any joints on the tight-radius curves.

Wooden buildings reflected the temporary nature of these sites. The structures modelled play a big part in disguising the continuous run.

There were, with one or two exceptions, no tunnels on these lines. So, the track has to disappear under structures and between buildings. On the right-hand side, the line passes under the gantries across the foundation trench for the dam, which works well

ABOVE: A train arrives to collect the workforce. Just behind the loco is one of the Gnomy brand trams, remodelled to look like the horse trams that contractors bought second-hand to transport workers on and off-site.

LEFT: This structure represents a concrete mixer plant, based on a photograph in a reference book. It's unusual because the top loading area is open to the elements, enabling me to model details not normally seen.

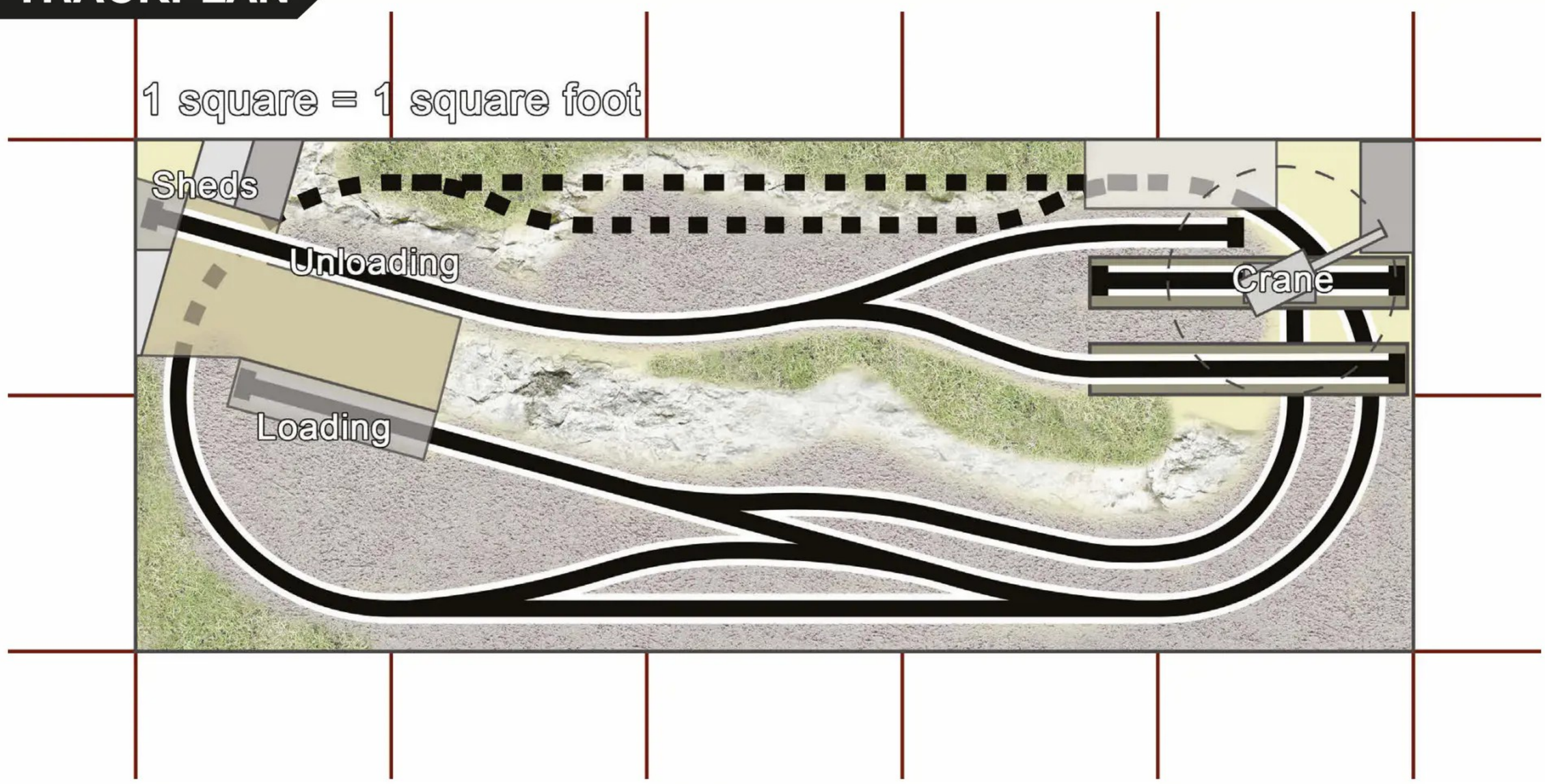
BOTTOM LEFT: Before I found the photo mentioned above, this structure originally had a roof over the top platform and all planked in. It looked out of proportion and was replaced with the one you see now.

and is prototypical, but the left-hand side, where the track passes under the concrete mixer platform, does have the look of a tunnel. Coffee stirrers and bamboo skewers play a big part in all the structures, along with scribed planked wood sheets from the sales department of the 7mm NG Association. The roofs are Slater's Plastikard corrugated iron sheet; this is actually 4mm 00 scale, but nobody has pointed this out to me yet!

The scenery is built up with layers of 50mm insulation board, the one faced with foil (which just peels off). It carves with a bread knife or similar and I finish it off with a layer of plaster bandage. My challenge was to include as many facets of these railways without over-detailing the scene to try to give the impression of the open landscape where many of these works were located. I have kept it simple in colours and textures. The area of moorland is represented with grass mat and scenic tufts from Peco and the excavated ground with different colours and grades of scatter material. The layout is populated with period-dressed workmen, using

ABOVE: The low-relief building above the concrete works clad in corrugated iron is the cement storage shed. The prototypes for these were elevated off the ground to prevent damp. The track runs under this to disguise the continuous run.

TRACKPLAN



RIGHT: A picture of the foundation trench not seen at normal viewing from the front of the layout. The model represents the Dam in the early stages of construction, waiting for the concrete foundations to be poured in.

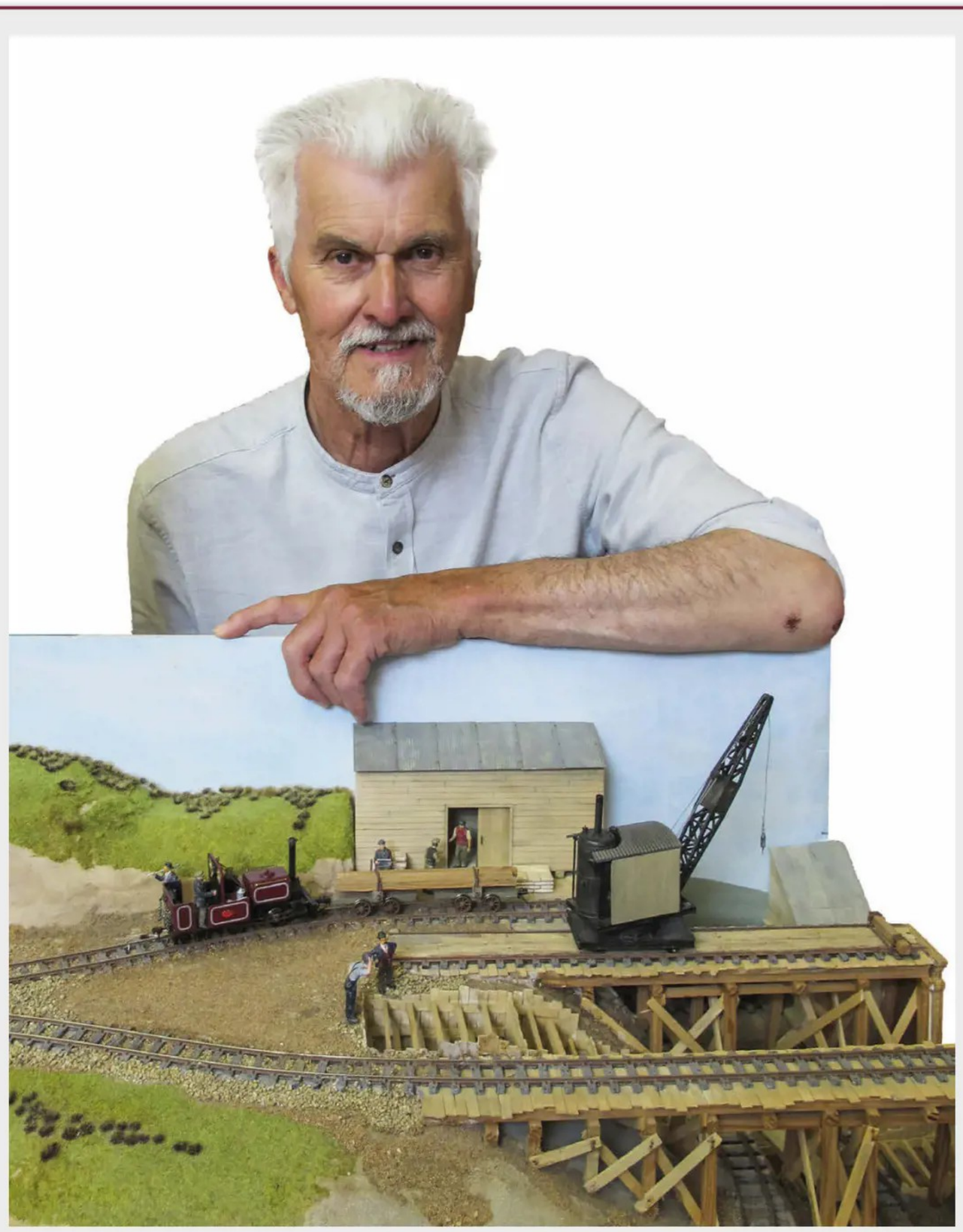
BELOW: The saddle tank pulling its train of 'V'-tippers past the quarry is a Springside Models white metal kit designed to fit the Hornby L&Y 0-4-0ST 'Pug' chassis. The layout has three of these, all with detail differences and colours.

white metal castings from various manufacturers. Two items of machinery add to the scene; a Duncan Models white metal kit excavator converted to steam-era with the addition of a boiler and a steam-powered gantry crane made from a heavily chopped-up Airfix/ Dapol dockyard crane kit.

Rolling stock

All my stock is freelance and are based on prototypes known to be used in the era modelled. Up to the present time, there is very little ready to run in 7mm 016.5, so one has to be a scratch-builder or kit-maker. I am the latter and enjoy the process of creating a model from a box of bits. My loco stock is a combination of resin or white metal body kits on proprietary chassis and Anglicised Bachman Porter Logging Locos. Wagons consist of a rake of four scratch-built wooden-bodied side tippers of a type used by all contractors of the time. There's also a rake of four 'V'-tippers, hybrids of Peco and Smallbrooks Studio parts to give an older inside-frame look, and one wagon and two vans bought second-hand of an unknown manufacturer. Then there's the rake of four workmen's coaches adapted from toy trams of continental origin. Branded 'Gnomy', these have been a staple of narrow gauge modelling for many

“Up to the present time, there is very little ready to run in 7mm 016.5 so one has to be a scratch-builder or kit-maker.”



About the modeller

Name: David Butcher
Age: 77
How many years modelling: 72 years
Name of your first layout: 'Nab Wood'
Favourite era/region: All UK narrow gauge

Now in my 70s and having always lived in Yorkshire, my interest in narrow gauge railways and modelling them started like many others with a holiday in Wales with my parents in the early-'60s at 14 years old. We visited the lines existing at the time, including Talyllyn and Welshpool. This lifelong interest is not reflected in the number of layouts built. Three in 60 years! Lots of modelling of locos and stock in between. The first in 4mm scale on Tri-ang TT chassis to give 3ft gauge, built when I was 15 years old. The second was a 009 layout at the age of 32, and the third is what you see now. The idea for this railway started in my mid-60s, when retirement gave me more time and 7mm scale appealed. It might be a cliché, but the larger scale suits failing eyesight and arthritic fingers.

We all learn our craft from other modellers over the years, from the modelling press and, more recently, online. But I would say to anyone starting in a particular scale/gauge combination to join the association/society that is dedicated to it. I have been a member of the 7mm Narrow Gauge Association for the past dozen or more years, and the help I have received from fellow members, association publications and the modelling goods sales department has been invaluable over the years. In my many years of modelling interest, there have been many people and layouts that have kept inspiring me over time, too many to mention, and it wouldn't be fair to leave anyone out.

years. The last model made for the layout is a scratch-built wood and Plastikard open-sided workman's bogie coach. All the stock is fitted with Kadee couplings, which have worked OK on the layout.

'Withins' has a traditional DC system. The lower-level main line has to be 'one engine in steam', but using the front and hidden rear passing loops, it is possible to have three trains alternating, with dextrous use of the points and isolating sections. The high-level line operates with a Gaugemaster shuttle unit, and changing the point at the right time sends the train down the chosen track. The controllers are Gaugemaster and are part of a small control panel with trackplan, which has micro-switches for the points and isolated sections. The control panel is movable from the front at home to the rear for shows. The points are activated by Gaugemaster solenoids and a CDU. All the electrics have performed well up to press.

At home, I do not operate the layout as such, but it is set up ready for use as a test track for new stock and running-in. It's a train set for my grandchildren, who are now old enough to respect and use it correctly, or I just put one of my best slow-running locomotives on with some stock and just let it run while I am modelling. It is at exhibitions where the operating potential is governed only by the DC system. These railways would have had several engines working at once, so we keep things running and vary the stock continuously. Even though it is a small layout, a team of two is best for shows. An operator, usually my son-in-law John (a modeller in his own right), can keep things moving without derailments and trains colliding, leaving me free to answer questions, which often happens with an unusual subject for a layout.

ABOVE: In the early days of construction, these sites would have had lots of timber piled around ready to build the various structures. In model form, the timber is strip wood from model shops, bamboo burger skewers and coffee stirrers from catering suppliers.

Reflections

If I was repeating building 'Withins' again, the main thing I would do is make it bigger (and lighter). To fit in our present car, it could be 6ft 6in long x 2ft 6in wide on two boards. Baseboard joints are a necessary evil for show layouts, meaning a scenic challenge to hide them. I would still like the continuous run and the orientation of everything would be the same, but I could include more of the dam and try to disguise the continuous run at the opposite end so it looks less like a tunnel. I might add a couple more structures or use the extra size to open out the scene to give the impression of the large area these sites covered. The above is just theory. 'Withins' will not be repeated, but possibly the next layout, whatever its theme might be, on the baseboard sizes above.

As a home layout, it has reached a crossroads creatively, so do I try and make changes or enhancements that might not work? Strip it back to the board and track and create something different? My fellow modellers say keep it as it is and start something else. Whatever comes next will still be 7mm Narrow Gauge. I have time and investment in the models I have created so far, and have a few kits and projects to keep me going till a future layout is decided on. Due to my track record with time between layouts (20 years), I might not be able to leave it as long! ■

TOP LEFT: The open version of my modified Porters, prototypical but unusual for these exposed sites, pushes a twin bolster set with a timber load alongside the crane.

MIDDLE LEFT: This view is what I have tried to create in model form, giving the impression of the distance that these sites covered.

BELOW: Pictured are two of the three Porter logging locos on the layout, a simple inexpensive conversion to look more UK-based. Starting with a remodelled cab and straight chimney, all three are smooth slow runners and have clocked up many miles at exhibitions.

The 'Highland Chieftain' at 40

By Ian Lamb

Ideally, a through train between London and Inverness was called for; then, even though - for whatever reason – it was running late, at least you knew you were going to get home, and especially in winter time you would not need to 'freeze' at the main stations between trains, or particularly attempt a record-breaking run across the city between Central and Queen Street for nothing! Seeing the tail lights of the last train to Inverness disappearing into the Mound tunnel, or particularly up Cowlairs tunnel, is not to be recommended. I had experienced that latter situation while 'commuting' to and from Harrow in North London when I took up an appointment with the local education authority in 1980.

Initially, Watford Junction became my main point of transfer, and I had intentions of perhaps trying to resurrect 'The Clansman', but the incredible success of the HST (High Speed Train) Class 43 caught my eye, so instead I concentrated on an extension of such a service beyond Edinburgh to Inverness. The 'swallow' logo was a brilliant piece of marketing by BR, giving the impression that this train would easily compete with flight. When that wonderful slogan "IC125" came on the scene, you just knew that this train would be fast.

The idea of a new train (not just decanted locos and stock from elsewhere) running between Inverness and London was not just exciting, but breath-taking! It was a better and safer train to travel in than some other designs that followed, and way ahead of the original 'Blue Pullman' from which it was derived.

June 24th, 2018. Nearing the journey's end, about to come off Culloden Viaduct and descend to Inverness. Rob Hawkins, LNER

This titled train became just one of more than 30 that travelled between England and Scotland daily on the East Coast Main Line. It was an InterCity 125, which – in 1985 – set the world speed record for diesel traction at 144mph, north of Peterborough.

Generally talking with railwaymen en route, I was made aware that rumours of such a service were in vogue, so I set about planning the ideal route and title of the train, a vitally important direct business and tourist link between London and Inverness, the capital of the Highlands.

In those days, 'BR' was not exactly enamoured with the idea of named trains, but this new enterprise was just crying out for such recognition. Without prejudice, I wanted to ensure that it carried a Scottish reference. I offered three names, and was particularly delighted when they chose 'Highland Chieftain', not so much because it was the most appropriate title, but this name had been carried on a popular Thompson A2/1 Pacific locomotive No. 60507 that was based at Haymarket depot in Edinburgh and no doubt regularly pounded the then Glenfarg route from Edinburgh to Perth with Highland-bound passengers.

Initially, I would have settled for the Fife route to Perth, but on trying to maximise the full potential for such a service, I considered it essential that the towns of Stirling and Falkirk should have a direct link to London, which is the route that the 'Highland Chieftain' still follows today. Timing is vitally important for this service, especially the midday service out of King's Cross; and nowadays with an 0830am departure from Aviemore, and a non-stop run from York, ensures arrival in London before 4pm, otherwise flight would be quicker.

The 'Highland Chieftain' was inaugurated with the summer timetable in 1984. Powered by two diesel locomotives producing a combined 4500hp (greater than that of 45 average family cars), the 'Highland Chieftain' covered the 563 miles of its journey each weekday in just over eight hours. Such was their reliability that some units were said to have covered eight million miles by the time they were replaced with the Class 800 'Azumas'!

Once the train had become established and popular, the marketing people really went to town in ensuring that this train was 'extra special'. In the early days, there was specific printed material like route packs and drink mats, which made excellent souvenirs.

When I went south for the first time, BR's marketing team was suggesting to the general public that they should "let the train take the strain" and "you could have been there by now" heading on a poster showing road traffic jams. A lot of these publicity ideas were promoted using well-known celebrities of the day, or as my young people in London used to say, "I was British Rail's best customer"!

I preferred the northbound journey because it is always nice to be going home, and also due to the fact that many of my southbound journeys to London were of necessity on the overnight "Royal Highlander" to Watford Junction.

However, the southbound run was the more attractive. I would sit in my allocated seat from Aviemore as far as my native Edinburgh, and once the suburbs had been left behind and the train accelerated rapidly across East Lothian, I would make my way through to the restaurant car and enjoy the cuisine of first-class travel all the way to about Stevenage when I would return to my original seat (if someone else hadn't sat on it).

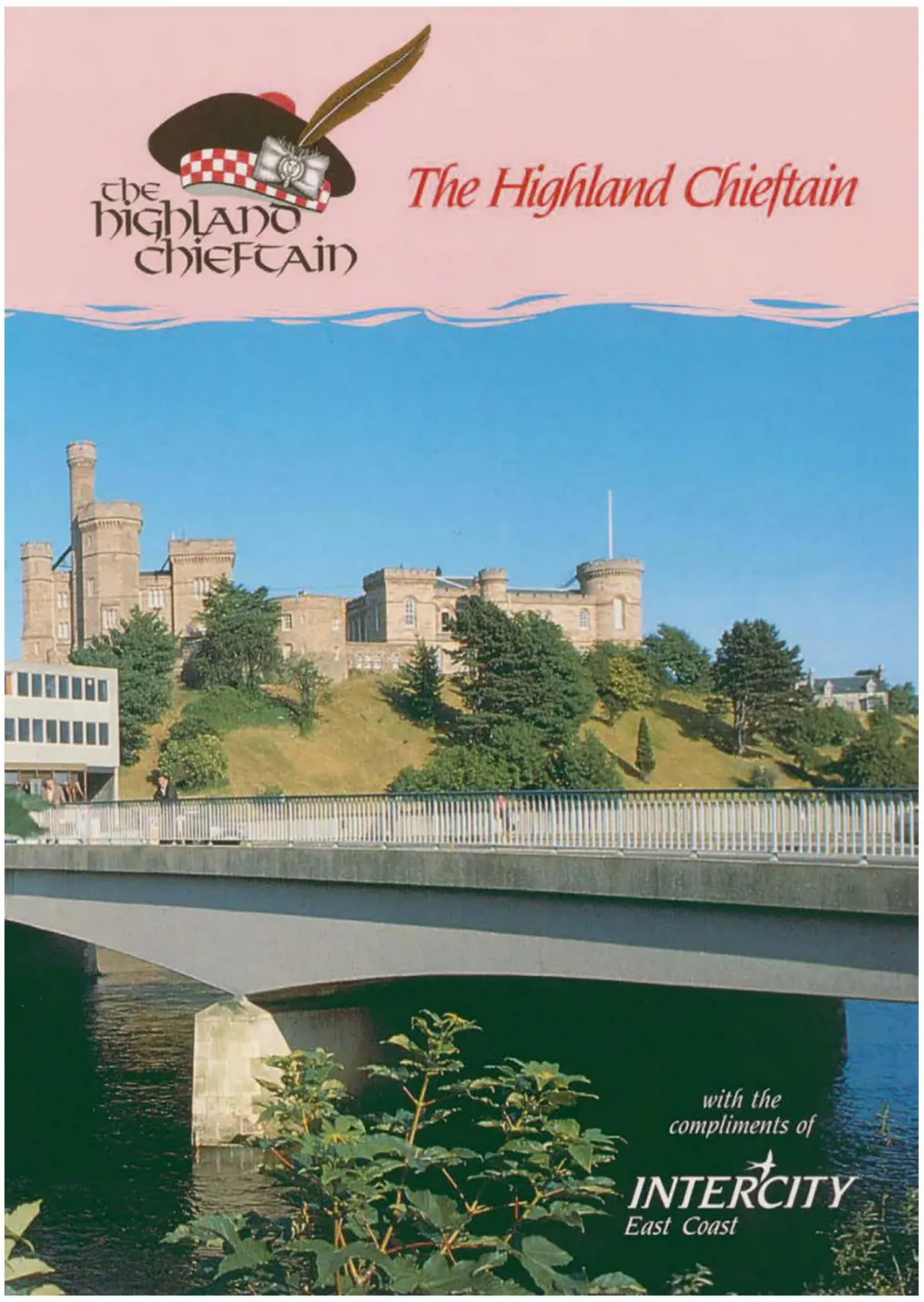
It is amazing the amount of people I met over dinner, from businessmen to judges; elderly people (like myself now) going south to visit relatives or having enjoyed a 'City Break' in "Auld Reekie" (alias Edinburgh).

Being responsible for outdoor learning inevitably meant that many 'Harovians' were first introduced to Scotland through travelling on the 'Highland Chieftain' as far as Gleneagles for the short onward journey to Crieff in beautiful Perthshire, where they were introduced to the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme.

Assembling a group of young strangers at King's Cross prior to a 1pm Sunday departure was always a wonderful experience; even more so when handing them back to their parents a week later because many youngsters simply did not normally travel by train. They went everywhere by car! In all these journeys, I can only remember once

October 5th, 1952: Thompson A2/1 Pacific No. 60507 *Highland Chieftain* rests quietly at Haymarket MPD.
W A C Smith

An original HST at Edinburgh Waverley station. Courtesy LNER



Inverness City Centre and Castle above the River Ness. Courtesy LNER

being late into London; most times the train was a few minutes early. All credit must go to the respective train operators of the day for their excellent performance, especially the onboard train crew.

Whether in the clean air of Aviemore or the fume-filled 'cathedral' station at York, I cannot better Ben Jones's description of what it feels like to witness an IC125 in motion.

"It starts with a bright headlight in the distance. You hear the scream of the engines, and that unmistakable nose cone comes into view. Stand well back from the edge of the platform as it approaches – first, one power car deafens you as it passes, then there's the whoosh of the trailers before the rear power car rocks you back on your heels again in a haze of diesel fumes and turbulence. Recover your composure and watch as the train rapidly vanishes into the distance. What more impressive sight and sound is there than an HST in full cry passing Didcot or Doncaster?"

"The sight of an HST – or InterCity 125 – has been an inspiration to many budding enthusiasts and modellers over the last 30 years. For the modeller, the fleet offers huge potential. Not only are the trains seen from Penzance to Inverness and many points in between, they have appeared in a rainbow of liveries and, far from being the standard fleet you'd imagine, there are many detail differences to challenge and interest the modeller."

There have been various liveries and corporate images over the years, and Hornby has tried to model them all. For me, the 'GNER' livery was the most attractive and showed the Class 43 unit at its best. I was delighted that in model form, No. 43105 *City of Inverness* was chosen to represent the class in 'GNER' colours, and certainly its marketing people at the time could not have bettered its slogan, "Route of the Flying Scotsman".

A rare occasion for the 'Highland Chieftain' was to traverse the cantilevers of the magnificent Forth Bridge while major engineering work was being carried out at Falkirk. Ironically, this was the original proposed route to Perth through Fife when this train was established in the mid-1980s. The autumn sun shining through the fragile-looking bridge structure in early evening is perhaps more ominous than that simply of nature as the ubiquitous HSTs were replaced by the Hitachi 'Azumas', making it no longer possible to slide down a window and create a memorable scene.

It may take almost as long to travel between Edinburgh and Inverness as it does to London, but it is a necessary experience to either build up or wind down for the fast pace of southern life. You need that time to really appreciate the beauty of an early-morning departure as the mist rises from the incredible Cairngorm Mountains, or sedentary refreshment in the restaurant car while the "down" 'Highland Chieftain' leaves Pitlochry. Ahead, a glorious sunset descends on the valley with the twinkling lights of Blair Castle starting to appear beneath the slopes of Ben a'Ghlo, most appropriately translated as "mountains of mist" in the Gaelic language. Eventually, both train and destination come together in the new 'City of Inverness'.

With the arrival on the scene of LNER as the operating authority, and even more so the incredibly attractive 'AZUMAs', every effort was made to entice people to speedily travel to and from the Highlands. Such a journey is one that I was looking forward to since the inauguration of the latest trains. "Azuma" means "east" in the Japanese language and these new LNER IET Class 800 coach sets are based on the internationally-renowned 'Bullet' trains and are assembled at Newton Aycliffe in the North East of England.

To leave London at 'High Noon' and be in Aviemore by 7.30pm is quite an achievement. Apart from naming the train "Highland Chieftain", I got to know many of the drivers over the years. Then, on December 10th, 2019, I was invited by LNER to

At high speed round the Berwickshire coast near the Scottish/English Border. Courtesy LNER

participate in its celebrations launching the new Azuma train service taking over the 'Highland Chieftain' mantle from the original HSTs. Indeed, a new era of comfort and style along the East Coast route.

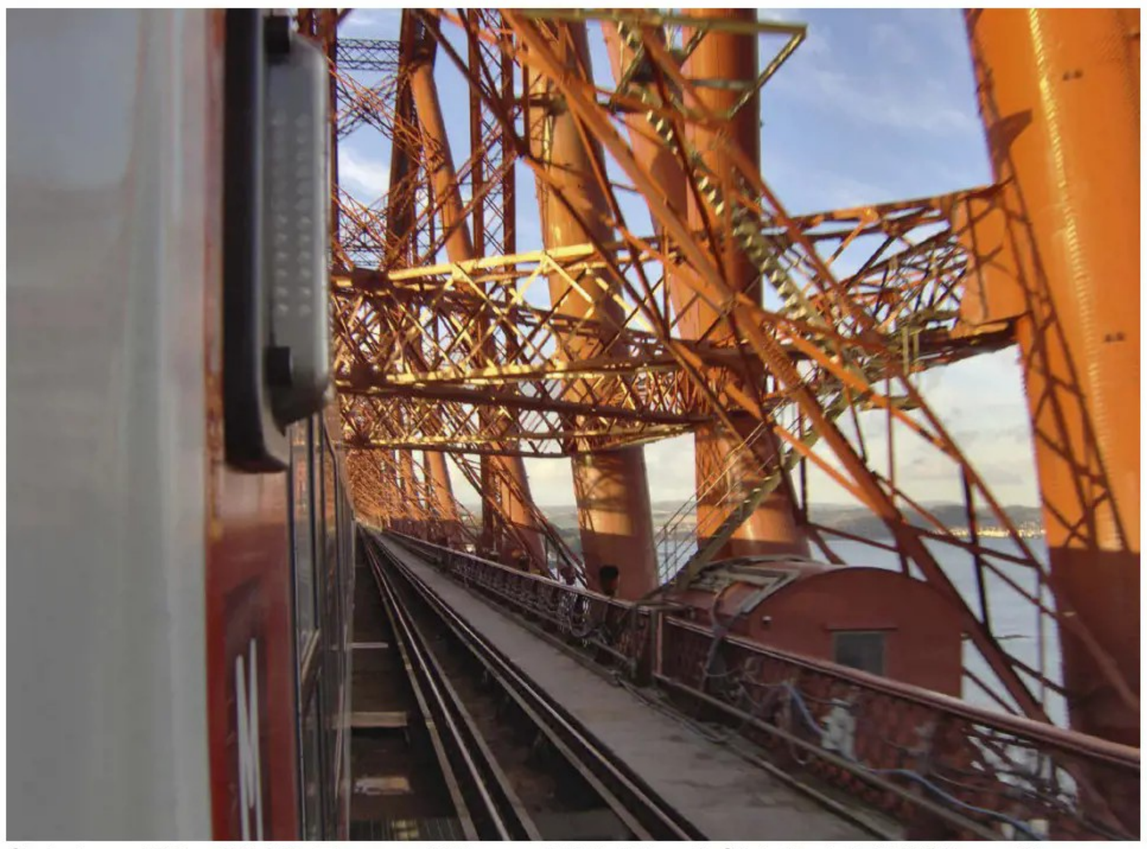
LNER operates The Highland Chieftain service in both directions every day between Inverness and London King's Cross. The inaugural northbound Azuma service arrived at Inverness on Monday evening on December 9th, 2019, while the first southbound train headed to London the following day at 07:55. It featured the specially designed 'Celebrating Scotland' livery in a striking specially-commissioned LNER tartan.

Because of daily prostate cancer treatment**,** I was unable to continue on the inaugural train to London, but after medical treatment had been successfully completed, I was given the opportunity at the start of the 2022 Summer Timetable to make the journey. With great excitement, I looked forward to the next chapter of my 'Highland Chieftain' venture since its original inauguration in 1984, by travelling south on Monday, May 16th, 2022.

One of my favourite authors from childhood, Robert Louis Stevenson (probably best known for 'Treasure Island'), was a great railway enthusiast and wrote a piece called *Ordered South*, which seemed very appropriate for my journey.

"Herein, I think, lies the chief attraction of railway travel. The speed is so easy, and the train disturbs so little the scenes through which it takes us, that our heart becomes so full of the placidity and stillness of the country; and while the body is borne forward in the flying chain of carriages, the thoughts alight, as the humour moves them, at unfrequented stations; they made haste up the poplar alley that leads towards the town; they are left behind with the signalman as, shading his eyes with his hand, he watches the long train sweep away into the golden distance."

It was heavy rain at Inverness station as it neared the early departure time. The route itself southwards was very challenging right from the start at almost sea-level, leaving little opportunity to initially build up power for the gruelling ascent over Culloden and up to Slochd Summit at 1350 feet.



October 19th, 2018. The northbound 'Highland Chieftain' (1200 ex Kings Cross) crosses the Forth Bride. Ian Lamb

Running downhill from Slochd Summit, the 'Highland Chieftain' coasts towards Carrbridge. John Gray

What a classic image of the Tyne bridges. Courtesy LNER

Once over the top, the train descended through Carrbridge and onto the relatively level run through Aviemore. Having found my seat, unloaded all belongings, removed my jacket, I was comfortably ensconced ready for the long journey south. In that time, this Class 800 train had already 'done the ton' through Strathspey over the dead straight length of track above Loch Insch, and on to Kingussie and Newtonmore before ascending the Druimuachdar Pass and into magnificent Perthshire. Now truly warmed up before the long descent to Blair Atholl, an earlier caution through Dalwhinnie had taken its toll, so Perth was reached six minutes late. Before stopping in the county capital, the journey descending through the picturesque Glengarry and Tay valley to Perth was no problem for this train. No time was wasted, and within minutes the 'Highland Chieftain' was through Moncrieff tunnel and rushing through the Earn valley on a 1 in 100/75 ascent towards Gleneagles beneath a pleasant late spring, partly sunny, yet grey cloudy day. Strathallan dominates the conurbation of little towns and villages while descending to Stirling, then leaving the former Caledonian line at Larbert for a relatively fast run through Falkirk Grahamston to Edinburgh, descending into Calton tunnel and down the 1 in 70 Abbeyhill incline before zooming past the former site of St Margarets MPD. Beyond Craigentinny, a few flashes of the sunlit Firth of Forth was observed, whilst wooded hills line the banks of the river Esk as the train makes its way to the coast at Musselburgh. Ahead lay certain speed restrictions due to the terrain and the labyrinth of old mine workings in the Lothian coalfield.

The train was travelling very fast over this section's 'race track' to Dunbar; swooping like a racing bird along the slightly rising stretch, which levels out before Drem, and over the 'Knot' - which is East Fortune – and through the elongated "S" bend towards East Linton before the driver braked gently for the notorious curve through Dunbar. Low cloud and damp conditions over the sea hugged the coastline. Torness Power Station and Thorntonloch was soon passed in building up speed over the 1 in 96 incline at Cockburnspath, reaching the highest point (400 feet) from Edinburgh beyond Penmanshiel before descending at 1 in 200 through Grantshouse. Then, through and away up the hills to effortlessly pass Reston and onwards to the Border. The Eye Water passes beneath the railway seven times in a few miles. Hills come right down to the line on our right, while to the left are glimpses of the sea every now and again. Three miles north of Berwick is a brightly painted sign indicating the exact border between Scotland and England.

On leaving Berwick, the train is suddenly on the half-mile-long Royal Border Bridge across the Tweed, the only Scottish river to enter the sea in England. A very impressive vista of the land surrounding Berwick is viewed as the line sweeps round three sides of the town. At Scremerston; not far off the rocky shore, the coast seems strangely wild and deserted. Rushing past the village of Philadelphia – any greater contrast to that of the state in the USA would be hard to imagine!

Rushing over the viaduct at Alnmouth (the junction for Alnwick along the heritage railway line) leads the eye momentarily above the River Coquet towards the distant outline of the 12th-century Warkworth Castle, once the residence of the Percy Family. On approaching Morpeth, some braking was necessary for the notorious severe 'S' curve through the town.

On departing Newcastle Central station, the train slowly emerged round the sharp curve onto – and from - King Edward bridge over the wide River Tyne. To the left is the High Level bridge, and beyond is the King George suspension bridge. Once through Gateshead, the 'Angel of the North' statue on the hill stands prominently on approach to Chester-le-Street. The whole area here was once a myriad of collieries connected by wagonways that headed off in all directions or passed beneath the railway every few miles. At Newton Hall, the railway ran over a high embankment where brakes were applied for the curve and junction to Sunderland.

Speed restrictions through Durham enabled that really wonderful view, considered to be one of the best from any railway in the world. The city itself lies far beneath the viaduct in the valley, where the cathedral and castle stand above the wide River Wear flowing below.

Complex tracks and junctions exist at Ferryhill, and there are lots of subsidence problems caused by the honeycombed underground workings. Although the railway rises to 300 feet; no matter what actually went on beneath the ground through mining, the beauty of the countryside is not impaired, especially when the sun broke through. Level crossings are prominent near Darlington.

We're now approaching a highly industrialised part of the country. On Darlington station platform is Stephenson's Locomotive No. 1, which – rightly – stands so proudly. Just beyond Croft Spa is the County Durham/Yorkshire boundary; hardly noticed as the train rushes over the River Tees.

From Thirsk to near Pilmoor, where the line from Harrogate comes in from the left, the railway is not only level, but almost dead straight, a stretch giving very high speed through delightful farming country, well wooded with numerous becks (rivulets) feeding the distant River Swale. For almost 16 miles, not only is the railway dead straight to the suburbs of York, but it is also level, hence high speed can be expected! Midway on this straight stretch to the left is the 'half way' sign between Edinburgh and London. On approaching York, the National Railway Museum stands out as the 'Highland Chieftain' crawls into the sharply curved and long platforms.

Safe arrival at London King's Cross. Courtesy LNER

Departing York, we passed through crowded marshalling yards and depots of one kind or another. As the train accelerated past the site of the erstwhile Chaloner's Whin Junction, the line heading off to the right for Leeds soon comes into view before the main line ascends and descends many times over various inclines. Following the departure of the 'Highland Chieftain' from York on its non-stop run to London, it was soon followed by a separate train that stopped at all the main stations thereafter.

Between Heck and Balne, the surprisingly-wide Goole Canal is crossed. Level crossings abound on this very flat land in the East Riding of Yorkshire. Doncaster station is rushed through; the former LNER's works lie on a massive site to the right, where many of the great steam locomotives of the past were constructed, along with much of the rolling stock. Branch lines and sidings converge in all directions, topped by the South Yorkshire to Hull route, while the railway to Lincoln heads off left.

Just before reaching Bawtry, the Yorkshire/ Nottinghamshire boundary is crossed. The line curves left towards Bawtry viaduct, where it crosses the River Idle. On approaching Retford, the train reduces speed to pass over the ex-MS&L/GC line from Sheffield to Grimsby.

Once clear of the Retford suburbs, the River Idle is crossed again, and for the next seven miles beyond Askham tunnel - on rising gradients to the 150 feet summit - there is then a steady descent to the level at Crow Park and under the old LD&ECR railway at Dukeries Junction.

Weather improving, the sun appears fully on nearing Newark 120 miles from London. At the town suburbs, not only the River Trent but also the former LMS main line to Nottingham is crossed on entry to the station. The main line to Nottingham veers left before crossing the Nottinghamshire/ Lincolnshire boundary, while the River Witham meanders its way underneath the railway. Beyond the town is a very fast section of almost six miles uphill to Barkston, where the Nottingham to Sleaford line is crossed. The main line from Nottingham sharply joins us right, and before you knew it, we were through Grantham station and heading for the 880 yards Stoke Tunnel, emerging at the summit of the line between York and London at 345 feet; now only 100 miles to go!

By now – nearing Little Bytham - I was starting to relax as I experienced running over the location where *Mallard* recorded at 126mph, the World Speed Record for Steam. During the 19th century, this village had been an important railway centre where passengers and freight using local lines could also find connections to other parts of the country. The area possessed vast clay deposits used initially for Roman pottery. In the nineteenth century, the bricks and pantiles it produced won national acclaim for their fine quality and were used in the construction of the railway viaduct that still dominates the village.

Around Essendine is low-lying land towards the Northamptonshire boundary, a district of very large farms watered by numerous rivers and streams passing underneath the line every few hundred yards. Soon, the mass of railway yards and loco depot of New England at Peterborough are passed left as the train slows down while going through this major railway station and junctions. Railway lines seem to radiate everywhere. The 'Highland Chieftain' soon gets into its stride, and once clear of this cathedral city, one is remembered that only 75 miles are left to King's Cross! Before passing Holme, a long high embankment is traversed over many streams.

LNER A4 4468 *Mallard* just before the start of the record breaking run on July 3rd, 1938. RAS Collection

Today's 'Highland Chieftain' effortlessly crosses the Druimuachdar summit. Courtesy LNER

A deep cutting with an overhead aqueduct exists on approach to Abbots Ripton before descending at high speed through the market town of Huntingdon, slowing down on approach to the station. The very wide and beautiful River Ouse runs parallel to the railway as far as St. Neots, a lovely stretch of countryside. Once beyond Sandy - where the remains of the railway between Bedford and Cambridge shares the station for a short distance - our route ahead is dead straight over the nine miles between Biggleswade and Hitchin, very much a high speed section, running parallel to the River Ivel.

In the process, this 'Highland Chieftain' train heads out of Bedfordshire and into Herts. Stevenage, Knebworth and Welwyn are soon passed, including the two close tunnels, before crossing the 100ft high magnificent Welwyn viaduct over the River Mimram, which is a prominent local landmark located between Welwyn Garden City and Digswell, just south of Welwyn North railway station. Showery rain existed between Hatfield and Potters Bar.

Beyond Potters Bar is a deep cutting that leads into the 1214-yards-long tunnel, followed by the shorter Hadley Wood bore. All the following towns simply flash by until a slowing down on nearing London. Wood Green is always a marker for me to prepare myself for entry to King's Cross some five miles away. As a young teenager, I had a wonderful two weeks' holiday in the mid-1950s, staying with a school friend's relatives at Bounds Green, and mainly spent the time sitting on the high embankment 'spotting' the great expresses of the day as they thundered north and south.

As we passed the towering Alexandra Palace (and overtaking local services) – where the first BBC television programme was transmitted - I was reminded that, in more recent times, I had displayed my model railway layouts five times at the annual festival organised by The Model Railway Club, the oldest such society in the world, and Warners. It seemed like 'snail's pace as the train crawled past the Emirates Stadium on its way into London.

Modernised, yes; but entering Kings Cross station still has that moment of excitement that has never left me since I first cast my eyes on this wonderful station as a ten-year-old in 1951. Aviemore seems years away, yet this train today covered the whole distance from Inverness to London in the same time that it took my father and me between Edinburgh and London for 'The Festival of Britain' show.

My main recollection of that 'day trip' was in visiting Covent Garden during early morning and eating a peach for the first time in my life – a fruit that had not been available during the war years! That 'Platinum Jubilee' year indeed saw the 'Highland Chieftain' demonstrate a 'royal' performance between two great cities; that of Inverness and London. Surely a pointer to the future, and long may it continue.

Meanwhile, the 'down' "Azuma" service had equally reached its destination in Inverness, drawing attention to the fact that the future belongs to the next generation. I wonder what the train will look like in 40 years' time?

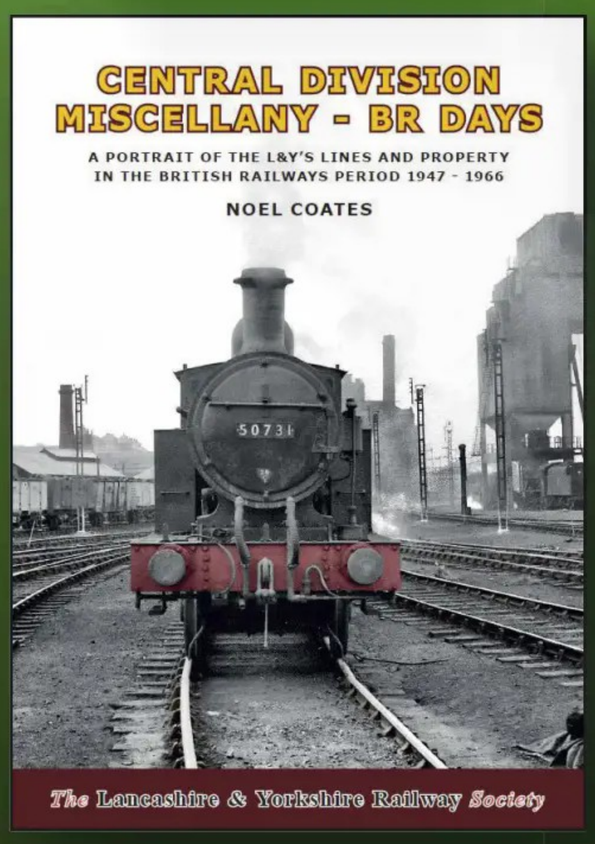
LNER has surely demonstrated that one can retain a sense of history and remain forward-looking. Allied to its Azuma rolling stock, its Class 91 and DVT horns sounded not unlike the chime whistle of an A4, a characteristic it inherited from BR. All these forms of motive power have certainly graced 'The route of the Flying Scotsman', and will no doubt continue to do so.

However, in all fairness, do give thought to the fact that the 'Highland Chieftain' will continue to be a direct contact between the north of Scotland and London because one of the original briefs for replacement was to end these trains at Edinburgh due to the intended motive power being all electric. This would have resulted in Aberdeen- and Inverness-bound passengers having to change to ScotRail services for their journey to and from home!

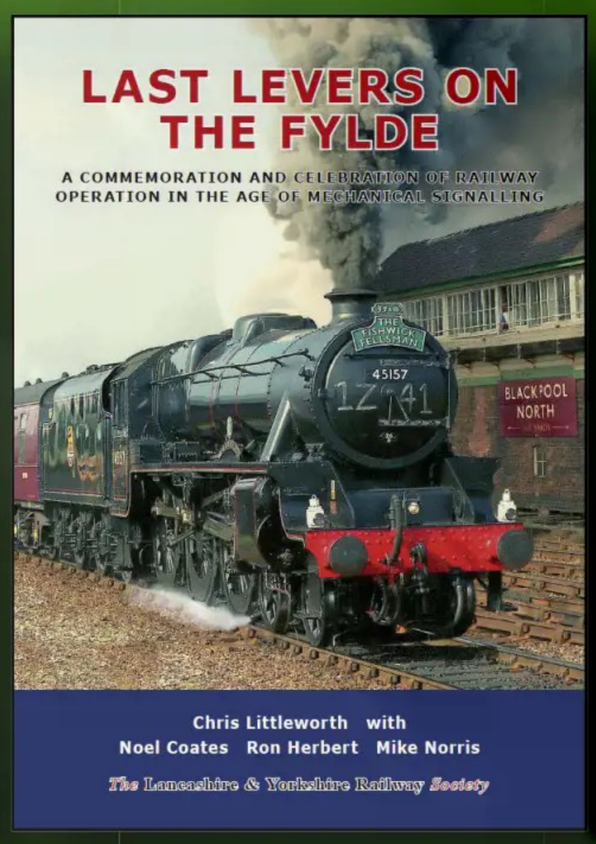
Due to the dogged determination of Danny Alexander (who was our MP at the time), the anticipated preferred bid was ousted in favour of the Hitachi one because they could manufacture bi-modal power trains, meaning that – like the existing HSTs – trains beyond Edinburgh would switch to diesel operation in leaving the Scottish capital city.

This article is dedicated to Jock Hay of Inverness, who passed away three years ago aged 97. He was one of the first drivers allocated to the 'Highland Chieftain' service 40 years ago. ■

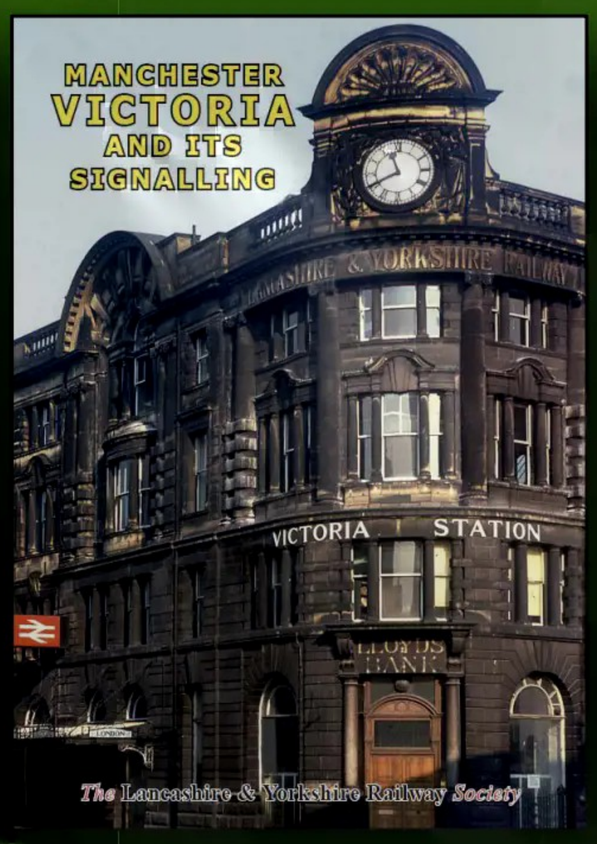
Which book would you like for Christmas?


CENTRAL DIVISION MISCELLANY - BR DAYS
A PORTRAIT OF THE L&Y'S LINES AND PROPERTY IN THE BRITISH RAILWAYS PERIOD 1947 - 1966
NOEL COATES
The Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway Society

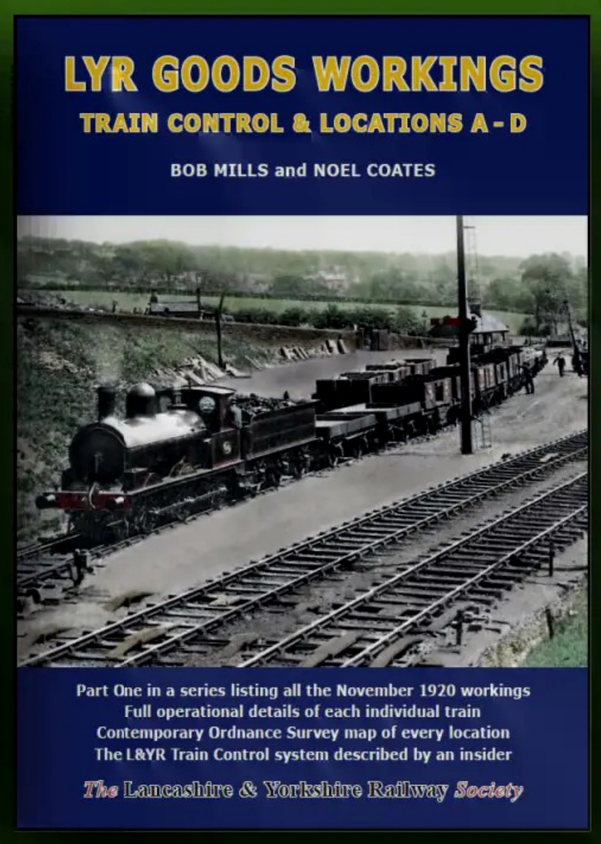
LMS Central Division Miscellany
A portrait of the L&Y lines and property in the LMS period


LAST LEVERS ON THE FYLDE
A COMMEMORATION AND CELEBRATION OF RAILWAY OPERATION IN THE AGE OF MECHANICAL SIGNALLING
Chris Littleworth with
Noel Coates Ron Herbert Mike Norris
The Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway Society

Last Levers on the Flyde
A commemoration of railway signalling operation on the Flyde



Manchester Victoria and its Signalling
An historical record of the workings of the station from 1838 to the present day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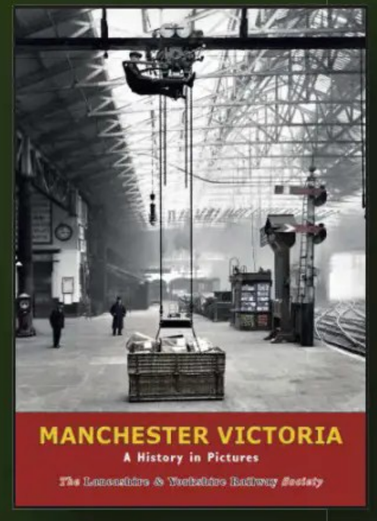
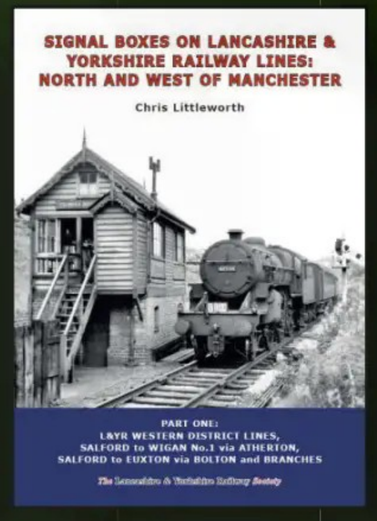
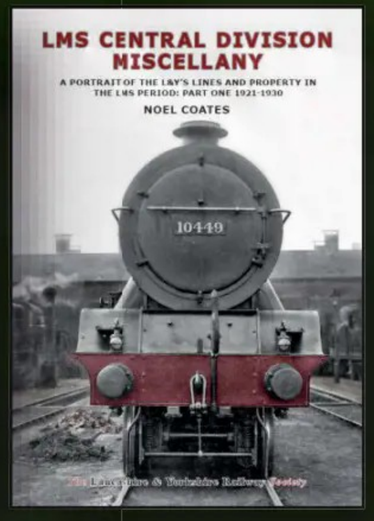



SIGNAL BOXES ON LANCASHIRE & YORKSHIRE RAILWAY LINES: NORTH AND WEST OF MANCHESTER
Chris Littleworth
PART ONE:
L&YR WESTERN DISTRICT LINES,
SALFORD to WIGAN No.1 via ATHERTON,
SALFORD to EUXTON via BOLTON and BRANCHES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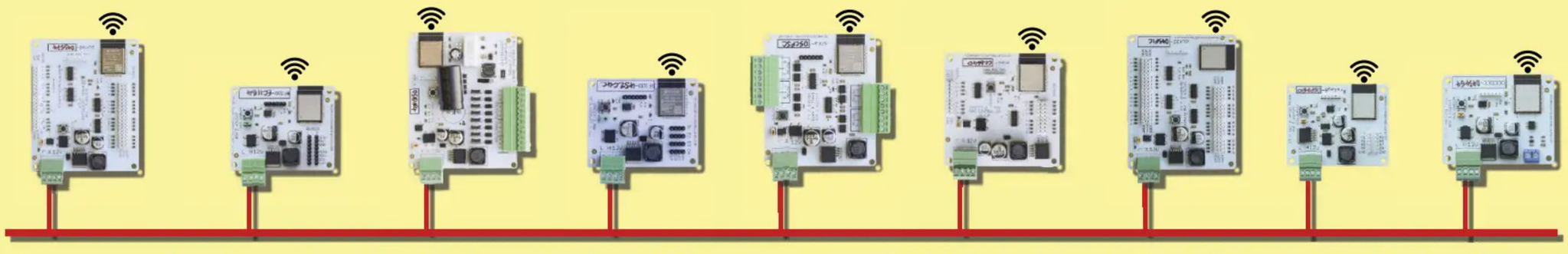

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SG4C

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THE LATEST HEADLINES

Bachmann 2024 Winter announcements

Bachmann has confirmed 168 new items in the Winter 2024 British Railway Announcements. The new products are the culmination of six new tooling projects that have been unveiled during the autumn, alongside a host of other models that are returning to the range with new liveries, features and identities.

N Gauge

The EFE Rail Class 41 D600 'Warship' locomotives that took centre stage at The International N Gauge Show in September will arrive later this month. Priced at £174.95, six models make up the launch offering, depicting the locomotives in their as-built condition through to their final years after having been modified with new ends, new grilles and, in the case of two examples at least, painted into BR's new corporate blue livery.

Joining the 'Warship' is the Mk1 POT Post Office Tender, Engineering Prototypes for which broke cover at the same time. Priced at £48.95, four liveries, each with a choice of two running numbers, will be available spanning the full career of the prototypes, from their introduction in 1968 to the end of the Travelling Post Office in 2004.

Other diesels that feature in the Winter range are the LMS 'Twins', Nos. 10000 and 10001. Following their launch earlier in the year, new versions now join the range depicting the pair in early BR livery and later in life, after returning to the Midland Region from the Southern and now decorated in BR Green with Late Crests and priced from £184.95.

New versions of the Mk.2A coaches, CCTs and Stanier Full Brakes will also be available, expanding Graham Farish's vast range of rolling stock. New N scale additions to the Scenecraft range centre on the East of England, with models of March Station and Wroxham Signal Box among the highlights this winter.

Narrow Gauge

The Bachmann Narrow Gauge range sees the 'Tin Car' Saloon Third Coaches put on general release after an initial period of exclusivity with the Ffestiniog Railway. Priced at £64.95, four models are available, depicting coaches No. 119 and 120 in their original Maroon livery and later Crimson & Cream colour scheme.

The Curly Roof Van and its rebuilt counterpart, the Brake Third, are the next coaches to be produced in OO9 by Bachmann, and the ornate Curly Roof Van will be produced as Van 1 in the ornate Lined Plum livery. Priced at £59.95, the rebuilt version of this vehicle, the Brake Third, appears in two authentic Ffestiniog Railway liveries of Yellow & Crimson and Green & Red, while a third version carries an attractive Crimson & Cream livery.

In Bachmann's Scenecraft range, a new Stone-built Engine Shed and Corrugated Platform Shelter join the line-up, with both models available in a choice of two-colour schemes.

OO Gauge

The Bachmann Branchline range has a strong steam theme this winter, as new models of the LNWR G2 and G2A join the range. Priced from £189.95, these will be available with the option of SOUND-FITTED for the first time.

The Midland Class 1532 (1P) also returns with new liveries priced from £174.95 for the Midland Railway, LMS and British Railways, showcasing these characterful machines throughout their working lives.

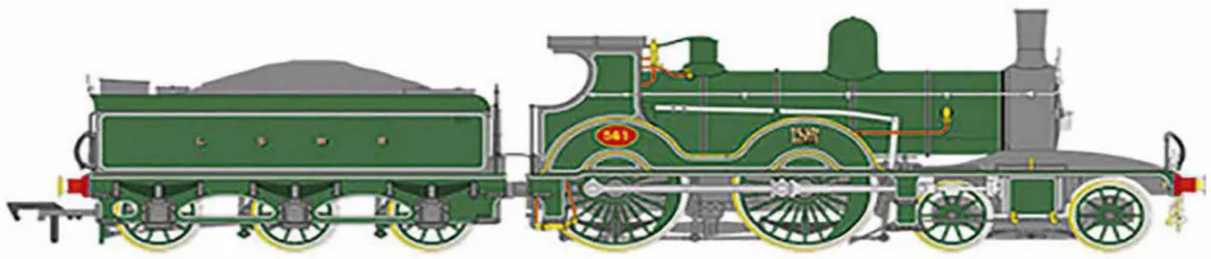
There is also a trio of new GWR releases, with the 4575 Prairie Tanks, the 8750 Panniers and the Class 56XX 0-6-2Ts returning to the Branchline range in a selection of liveries.

Bachmann's brand-new London & North Western Railway (LNWR) 50ft Arc Roof Coaches only broke cover at the end of October and now more details have been released. Priced from £99.95, the initial offering comprises models in the LNWR Dark Claret and White livery, LMS Crimson Lake and the Brown livery of the Midland & Great Northern Railway (M&GN).

New releases for the post-steam era include the trio of new Branchline Mk.1 Coaches, the Brake Second Open (BSO), First Open (FO) and Restaurant Buffet (RB), which appear in BR Blue & Grey livery for the first time. The BSO will also be produced as a BSOT with Micro Buffet and the model includes an appropriately modified interior and authentic livery detailing.

For the current scene, the 4-TC joins the Bachmann Branchline range for the first time as set number 428 in London Transport Maroon. This officially licensed product depicts the 4-car coach set that operates on the main line on railtours, charters and at heritage railways during galas and special events and is priced at £399.95.

Further OO scale models come from Bachmann's EFE Rail range this winter and the London & South Western Railway's (LSWR) T3 Class locomotive, which was revealed to members of the Bachmann Collectors Club first during the 2024 Members Day at the Swanage Railway. Priced at £199.95, the new EFE Rail model will first be available in a choice of five guises, showcasing many of the details and variants that have been built into Bachmann's tooling suite and include the preserved locomotive, No. 563.



New versions of the SR Booster locomotive, as No. 20001 in BR Green livery, and the Plasser 12T YOB Diesel-Hydraulic Crane, in Balfour Beatty's Blue & White scheme, will also be delivered this winter.

The final additions to the Scenecraft range this year come in OO scale and these include Low Relief models of a Department Store and a Town Garage. Full Relief models depict a Thatched Tavern, Snodland Signal Box, a Station Buffet, a Bus & Coach Station and a Wooden Bus Stop.

The final pair of buildings are particularly suited to use alongside the new EFE Road models for winter 2024, which depict the venerable Bedford OB as Bachmann celebrates 85 years since the first examples rolled off the production line with six new EFE Road releases.

Thomas & Friends

Also revealed this quarter were new models for Bachmann's Thomas & Friends™ range, with *Duck, Daisy, Terence the Tractor*, S.C.Ruffey and the Sodor Fruit & Veg Co. Ventilated Van all joining the line-up. Like all of Bachmann Europe's OO Scale Thomas & Friends™ range, these new models are officially licensed and are certified for ages 3+. The first of these new models will begin to arrive with Bachmann retailers during November 2024, and further details, including pricing and projected availability, can be found on the Bachmann website.

WORLD OF RAILWAYS **EXCLUSIVE**

Accurascale 16T BSC scrap wagons arrive

We are delighted to announce the imminent arrival of our exclusive set from Accurascale; a set of three British Steel-marked scrap wagons in a distinctive industrial livery. The set of three wagons bears distinctly different markings and decoration, forming an ideal basis to extend your weathering skills.

British Steel acquired life-expired 16T minerals, along with other types, for conveying scrap material to furnaces for recycling, resulting in a hotch-potch of types, repairs and condition, in an internal use livery that was frequently little more than locally applied ownership marking, numbers and weights marked for the benefit of those handling the materials.

The set of three British Steel Corporation-marked vehicles with patches, local renumbering and weight panels, are based on internal use wagons from within South Wales steel sites dating through the 1970s to 1980s. The livery of the wagon is in the style of these beaten, tatty and weathered wagons, which means they are ready to go into action, but it's a headstart for you as a modeller to create an individually-created unique model.

The models feature a die-cast chassis base with many etched, plastic and wire detail parts, including handrails, grab handles, side-door stops, brake gear, draw gear, with 3-link and Instanter couplings in the accessory pack.

Specific livery elements to this exclusive edition:

- Grey body with rust-coloured patched panels and scrape marks
- Dark grey weld seam lines to re-panelling
- BSC and wagon designation in white lettering
- White-painted handbrake lever
- Yellow load weight panels and lettering

The price is £74.95, including VAT, plus postage for a boxed set of three wagons. The production run is strictly limited to 250 sets. Sets can be ordered at **www.world-of-railways-shop.co.uk**

New livery added to Accurascale's popular Class 37 range

Accurascale has confirmed that 37418, the next addition to Run 3, is in the striking Red and White Loram livery.

Building on the specification of the existing Accurascale Class 37s, the new production run sees all new tooling to cater for the Class 37/4 variant, which now includes the operating roof fan that is synced to the DCC sound file and also operates on DC. There are subtle tweaks around the bonnet top doors, improved glazing fitment to stop them popping out in rough handling through the postal/courier systems, grille tweaks and further drive train and sound setup improvements.

Available to pre-order now, the DC/DCC-Ready locomotives are priced at £189.99 and the DCC Sound-Fitted locomotives are priced at £289.99.

As with any Accurascale Exclusives model, it will come complete with bespoke presentation packaging and a limited-edition certificate. Delivery is expected by the end of 2025.

OXFORD

Hornby to sell Oxford Diecast

It has been reported that the Margate-based company told shareholders it has entered into a conditional agreement to sell its Oxford Diecast business to EKD Enterprises.

Oxford Diecast, which was founded in 1993, has one of the largest ranges producing model vehicles and is the world's biggest manufacturer of 1:76 scale models.

Since its inception in 1993, the company has become a key player in the modelling world and the go-to place for model vehicles, working with some of the biggest manufacturers in the world like Ford, Volkswagen, Land Rover and more.

After a reported £200,000 pre-tax loss for the year to March 31, Hornby has looked to offload the popular brand to further streamline its business.

EKD, a business owned by former chairman and current non-executive director Lyndon Davies and his family, will pay £1.38 million.

Dapol reveals new PFA/KFA

Announced at the SVR O Gauge Get Together, Dapol has revealed plans to produce the PFA/KFA in O gauge.

The design team is currently evaluating the CADs and is in the process of providing the factory feedback to facilitate any necessary improvements. Priced at £80 each, the new models are available to pre-order now.

Specification includes correctly portrayed wheels, removable Lenz-style coupling pockets, removable container location pieces and accurately-mounted container points for Dapol 20ft, 40ft and 40ftHC containers.

Proposed Models

- 7F-042-001PFA 93245 Tiphook Yellow GPS Bogies Blue Body
- 7F-042-001UPFA Tiphook Yellow GPS Bogies Blue Body Unnumbered
- 7F-042-010PFA 93243 Tiphook Blue GPS Bogies Blue Body
- 7F-042-010UPFA Tiphook Blue GPS Bogies Blue Body Unnumbered
- 7F-042-020KFA 93262 Network Rail yellow GPS Bogies Black Body
- 7F-042-020UKFA Network Rail yellow GPS Bogies Black Body Unnumbered
- 7F-042-030PFA 93419 Tiphook Blue VNH-1 Bogies Blue Body
- 7F-042-030UPFA Tiphook Blue VNH-1 Bogies Blue Body Unnumbered
- 7F-042-040KFA 93389 Tiphook Black VNH-1 Bogies Blue Body
- 7F-042-040UKFA Tiphook Black VNH-1 Bogies Blue Body Unnumbered
- 7F-042-050KFA 93318 Refurbished Blue Sides On Body Black VNH-1 Bogies
- 7F-042-050UKFA Refurbished Blue Sides On Body Black VNH-1 Bogies Unnumbered

New IRM DL Class Hunslet diesel locomotives revealed

The announcement was made alongside the first engineering prototype samples at the Model Railway Society's Model Railway Exhibition held recently in Dublin.

Following on from the success of its Mark 2 Enterprise coaches, the Accurascale IRM team started looking at what would pull them and felt that the Hunslets would make for an ideal model, albeit there were only three of these locomotives and they are a little bit niche.

The sole survivor was scanned at the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum in Cultra, Co. Down, and research progressed at a rapid rate. With such swift progress made, the Accurascale IRM team has been able to get the Hunslets designed and tooled in record time and the first samples have been under test for several months.

With just a trio of locomotives and a small pool to choose from for variations, Accurascale IRM has decided to cover all major liveries for everyone in this first (and possibly only) production run.

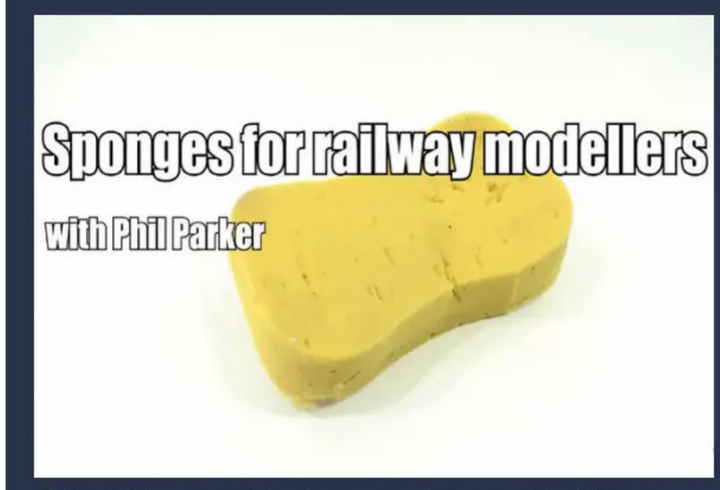
Available to pre-order now via the IRM or Accurascale websites and expected to arrive at the end of 2025, prices are £219.99 DC/DCC-Ready and £319.99 DCC sound-fitted.

WORLD OF RAILWAYS

To enjoy the following videos, interviews and features, visit: **www.world-of-railways.co.uk**

WATCH: We go lineside with David Westwood's N gauge layout, 'Burdock'.

ON TEST: Heljan's Latest O2/2 and O2/4 Gresley 2-8-0 'Tangos' go for a run on 'Little Bytham'.



ADVICE: In this latest video, Phil Parker shows us a couple of ways we can use sponges in our modelmaking.

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New 2025 Heljan Class 42 breaks cover

The all-new Class 42 'Warship' is available in OO gauge and will arrive in the UK next year.

With calls for an all-new 'Swindon Warship' growing in recent years, Heljan has responded with a new model. An initial batch of nine models are set for release in mid-2025 and engineering samples have now been revealed alongside livery artwork.

Available liveries

- Class 42 'Warship' V1 BR Green SYP *Jupiter* D826
- Class 42 'Warship' V1 BR Blue FYE *Zephyr* No.D868 (Twin Arrows)
- Class 42 'Warship' V1 BR Blue SYP *Monarch* No.D831
- Class 42 'Warship' V1 BR Maroon SYP *Onslaught* No.D832
- Class 42 'Warship' V1 BR Green FYE *Centaur* No.D808

Plus, Rails of Sheffield has cooperated with Heljan to develop models of the first prototype 'Warships', a variant never previously offered in ready-to-run form. The exclusive models will feature a set of magnetic train reporting number plates and will also feature original short (D800-D802) or standard nose handrails and original style underframe skirts between the bogies.

Rails of Sheffield Exclusives

- Class 42 'Warship' V1 BR Green SYP *Avenger* No. D804
- Class 42 'Warship' V1 BR Green SYP *The Royal Naval Reserve* 1859-1959 No.D812
- Class 42 'Warship' V1 BR Green SYP *Formidable* No.D802
- Class 42 'Warship' V1 BR Green *Sir Brian Robertson* No.D800

Available to pre-order now in DCC or DCC-Sound versions, priced at £219.00 and £319.00 respectively. The new models are expected to arrive at the end of the spring of 2025.

New KitMaster Genesis low-relief factory buildings

As part of Dapol's commitment to continue manufacturing as many products in the UK as possible, it is launching a new series of laser-cut card kits.

This represents a major investment in new equipment, and the new range of models will be marketed under the brand name KitMaster Genesis to pay homage to the old while embracing an exciting new future.

Available to order now, and arriving in shops in just a few weeks, the kits are laser-cut from card and will include all the necessary injection-moulded or 3D-printed accessory parts (including glazing) to complete the model. Where appropriate, the models will be supplied with printed interior decoration. All you need is glue.

The new low-relief factory buildings are based on industrial buildings in Keighley but are easily customisable should the modeller wish to have something bespoke on their layout. Multiple kits can be joined together to create a larger building using the included joining pieces, if desired.

- 7B-005-001 Low Relief Factory End (Doors & Hoist, Posable/moveable Doors, Footprint size 302mm x 90mm x 285mm, £50.00
- 7B-005-002 Low Relief Stone Factory End (Doors Only) Moveable Doors, Footprint size 282.5mm x 90mm x 292mm, £45.00

Hornby Collector Club exclusive

Hornby has revealed an exclusive *Locomotion No. 1* model available to pre-order for Collector Club members. The 'S&DR, 0-4-0, *Locomotion No. 1* Era 1 (R30345) is available to Collector Club members only and is limited to 730 units. Available via Hornby's website only, the new model will be arriving next month.

This OO model represents the seminal locomotive as it would have been displayed at Darlington North Road Station in 1857 and comes DCC-Ready, priced at £184.99.

Memberships cost from £30 and, as a Collector Club Member, you will receive a Collector Club magazine every season, as well as a host of other benefits, including free entry to The WonderWorks, a Collector Club membership card, lanyard, and pin badge as well as access to purchase exclusive Club products and advance notice of new products.

New Rapido LMS 12T vans revealed

Rapido Trains UK has announced new OO LMS D1832A and D1663 12-Ton vans added to its expanding range of LMS rolling stock.

Available to pre-order now priced at £32.95 and due to arrive at the beginning of 2025, the new models will feature the usual wealth of detail, including separately fitted parts such as grab handles, full external and underframe details, brass bearings, NEM coupling pockets and a high-quality livery application.

Locomotion announces new limited-edition models

Each year, the NRM releases souvenir models to help fund its work. Those for 2024/25 have now been revealed.

In OO, we have a blue grain wagon. For N gauge, there is a red iron mink, and O gauge enthusiasts can enjoy a yellow 6-plank wagon. All the models are produced by Dapol.

The sharp-eyed will spot that the running number on each is the year of production. The text on the side tells us they should be returned to Shildon, the NRM's recently expanded northern outpost and home of Locomotion Models.

We have a grain wagon for review, and it's nicely printed, and sports a matt finish, unlike most collectables, so it will sit well within a goods train on your layout without looking toy-like.

Locomotion tells us that it has retained last year's pricing for these models, but has ordered smaller numbers than in the past, making them even more collectable. All the wagons are available from Locomotion right now.

Rapido expands new 'Evolution' coach range

Rapido Trains UK will be adding two additional variants to its upcoming OO Gauge 48' 'Evolution' bogie coach range - the Non-Corridor First and Non-Corridor Full Brake.

Following the initial announcement of the OO Gauge 48' 'Evolution' bogie coaches in September, Rapido has been inundated with requests from the public for further tooling versions, and of those, two types came up time and time again. An All-First and Full Brake type.

All Evolution coaches, including the Non-Corridor First and Full Brake, will include fitted internal working lighting controlled by a magnetic magic wand, and each coach is fitted with NEM pockets and has optional close-coupling bars (modelled on vacuum pipes) included.

The 'Evolution' coaches, including the two latest additions, are currently in tooling and available to pre-order. Single coaches cost £69.95 and are due for delivery early next year.

New Factory Entrance kit from JSModels

JSModels has announced the release of a new 7mm scale 'Low Relief Factory Entrance' kit.

Launched at GuildEx a few weeks ago, this laser-cut MDF kit is available in both brick and stone finishes and is designed to be combined with two of the existing 'Extra-Low Relief Factory Back' kits to produce a stunning early 20th-century three-storey factory or office building.

The kit features a double-door entrance with stone steps beneath a large engraved clock face with separately-cut hands, allowing the modeller to set any time they wish – or even fit a suitable mechanism inside for a working clock! Doors can be modelled open or closed.

Each kit is made in the UK from a combination of 2mm, 3mm, and 4mm MDF, and includes clock hands cut from 0.6mm laserboard, as well as glazing material for the windows.

The Factory Entrance kit measures approximately 227mm wide, with the central section being 368mm high. The overall depth is 83mm, including the steps.

When combined with two of the standard Factory Back kits, as pictured above, the overall width is 1172mm, though the Factory Back kits can be customised to increase or decrease the total width to suit the space available. For height-restricted locations, two-storey versions are available on request.

Kits available from the JSModels website:

- JSM70224B Low Relief Factory Entrance (Brick) £60
- JSM70224S Low Relief Factory Entrance (Stone) £55
- JSM70222B Extra-Low Relief Factory Back (Brick) £45
- JSM70222S Extra-Low Relief Factory Back (Stone) £40

A 4mm scale version will be available soon.

THE MODEL TREE SHOP by MODEL RAILWAY MAGIC

Model Railway Magic acquires The Model Tree Shop

A name synonymous with quality model trees and landscaping materials since 2005, The Model Tree Shop has joined the Model Railway Magic portfolio.

The Model Tree Shop founders Steven, Sarajane, and Alexander Bird have passed ownership to Model Railway Magic, who also owns Train Trax UK, the go-to online destination for Kato model railway products in the UK.

Led by Ian Miller, Model Railway Magic Ltd's York-based team is dedicated to ensuring that The Model Tree Shop continues to meet and exceed customer expectations and customers can continue shopping online at **www.themodeltreeshop.co.uk**

New Ex-GER / LNER / BR Holden Class J17

OO Works has announced the arrival of a new Class J17, available to order now. Handmade here in the UK, the locomotives with tenders have cast metal bodies and a heavy metal chassis to provide maximum weight for haulage. These ready-to-run models are made to order in small batches in the OO Works workshops.

Powered by a coreless motor for smooth running, the new J17 is available in five liveries and is priced at £337 each, available via the OO Works website.

00 | 1954 - preservation | £££ 74.95

Accurascale Mk.1 suburban coaches

Andy York

Superb models of a mundane type, we see Accurascale's Second, Second Lavatory and Composite Lavatory in the review.

Casually referred to as Mark 1 suburban coaches, Accurascale's latest model is of the 57' (56'11" to be precise) non-gangwayed stock. The 57' type was principally used on the Eastern, London Midland and Scottish Regions from 1954 onwards on local and branch services, with the Southern and Western Regions utilising the longer 64' version. Most usage away from the capital petered out with branch closures and multiple-unit replacement through the 1960s, while the BR blue versions here became synonymous with the suburban services from and through Kings Cross from 1966 until 1977; the ideal match for Accurascale's wonderful Class 31 we reviewed last month.

The initial range spans the life with Midland-, Eastern- and Scottish-numbered versions in maroon and carmine as listed in the Factfile with multiple numbers as appropriate. Our review concentrates on the Second (S) and Brake Second (S) coaches, which formed the Inner Suburban services from Moorgate and Kings Cross to Hatfield or Hertford, as this stock had no first-class provision, individual compartments and no toilets with offset ventilators on the roof due to height restrictions in the tunnels of the Widened Lines. The same vehicles were utilised on the Outer Suburban services to Hitchin, Royston and Cambridge, with the addition of Second lavatory Opens (SLO) and Composite Lavatory (CL) vehicles, with the latter providing some first-class seating to the trains. Accurascale has helpfully provided train formation reference material on its website.

The quality of the models is quite staggering compared with previously-available models, with a huge amount of separately-fitted parts to the accurately shaped and dimensioned bodyshell with roof vents, door handles, handrails, body end steps, conduits and water piping on lavatory-fitted vehicles. The underframe is a work of art, with L-shaped bracing struts and frames for the battery boxes and separate vacuum cylinders, dynamo piping and brake mechanism parts and the BR1 bogies, which are marvellous. The accessory pack includes headstock pipes and cabling

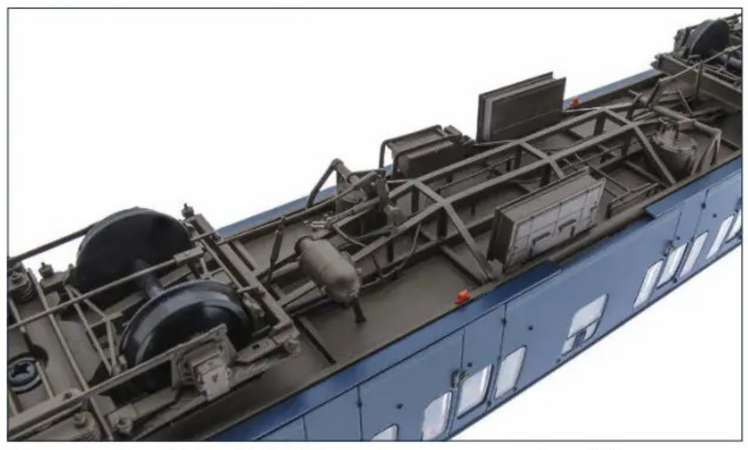
With the body removed, the fine etched mesh luggage racks can be seen in this interior view of the SLO vehicle.

The interior features posters on dividers, including a route map. Seats aren't just plastic lumps either, plenty of space for daily litter under the seats!

for the user to fit, along with alternative couplings for propelling on sharp radius curves to avoid buffer lock.

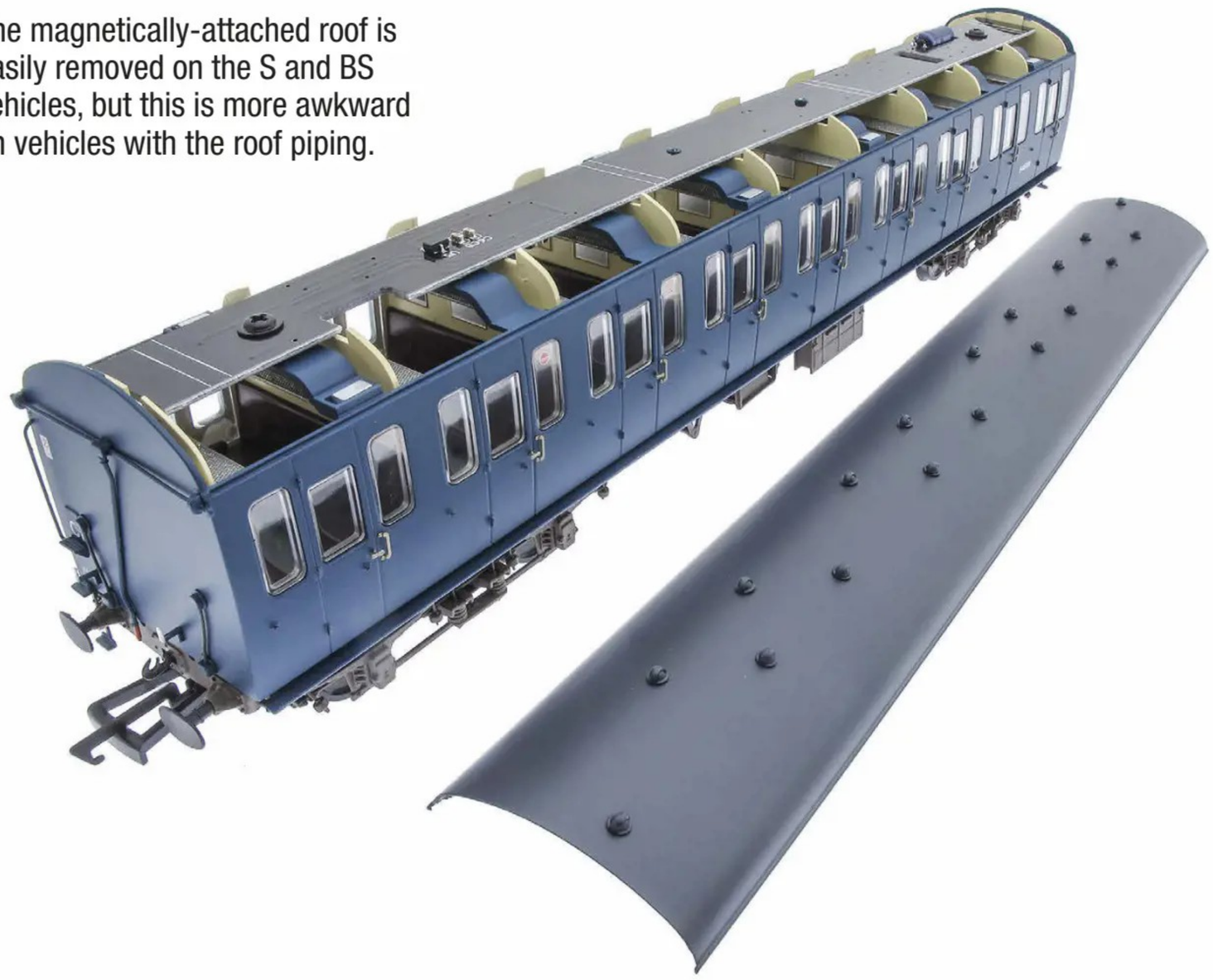
The running qualities are superb with a die-cast floor giving respectable weight while one bogie has electrical pick-up for powering the interior lights, with a capacitor for flicker-free illumination, which can be turned on and off with the included magnetic wand. The interior of the coaches is very good indeed, with separately-fitted seats with luggage racks above, including supporting frames in the open vehicles. Decoration extends beyond the panels and seats to posters on dividing walls and internal handrails behind the windows on the corridor side of the composite compartments. There's more internal decoration than external, but any text or numbering is pin-sharp, complementing the quality feel of the items.

The glazing is commendably flush with excellent printing of warning signs.



The underside detail is phenomenal, with a multitude of separately-fitted components.

The magnetically-attached roof is easily removed on the S and BS vehicles, but this is more awkward on vehicles with the roof piping.



FACTFILE

Models:
C Maroon - Sc41023
S Maroon - Sc46175
BS Maroon - Sc43216/Sc43314
SO Maroon - M48042/M48038
TO Crimson - M48041/M48036
T Crimson - M46305/ M46300/ E46229
S Lined Maroon (Low position) - M46069/M46071
S BR Blue - E46203/E46165/ E46162/E46147/E46112/E46108/ E46101
T Crimson - E46106/E46102
SLO BR Blue - E48009/E48006
C - Plain Maroon M41001/M41000
BS Crimson - M43366/M43361
BS - Lined Maroon (Low position) M43235/M43271
BS - BR Rail Blue: E43359/E43138
BT - BR Carmine Red: E43119/ E43113
CL - BR Rail Blue: E43043/E43003
BS - BR BTU Tool Vans: ADB963952 Accurascale Exclusive
Era: 1954-preservation
Construction: Plastic
Weight: 181g
Minimum curves: Radius 2 (438mm)
Accessories: Brake pipes, magnetic close couplers, destination boards and curtains where applicable.

WHAT WE LIKE

✓ Interior lighting and detail
✓ Glazing
✓ Underframe detail

Each coach has a magnetically-attached roof and this is simple to remove to add detail to the S and BS models but requires advanced care on any vehicle with roof piping. The instructions suggest removing the whole body for internal access on these, but even that can be challenging, I did break one of the lighting wires in the process. Refer to the instructions if you are doing this for the location of the body clips; the leaflet itself includes an informative history of the vehicle. Why don't more manufacturers do this?

The range is completed by an Accurascale Exclusive of a yellow BTU tool van, which was based at Doncaster from 1980 to 1988. I can't commend these highly enough; they are well-researched and designed with superb assembly of many complex components.

00 | 1988 - preservation | £££ 144.95 - 244.95

Rapido NER H / LNER Y7 0-4-4T

Andy York

Late-Victorian and Edwardian locomotives do seem to have an elegance that waned as sizes increased and the years progressed. TF Clarke's 'E' class design is, in my eyes, a good looker and a great subject matter for a model.

Rapido continues to delight with its early and possibly quirky offerings; the latest being the North Eastern Railway H, which was later classified as the LNER Y7. The immediate impression is the small size, 81mm in length over the buffers with a 24mm wheelbase – all measuring up exactly to the prototype dimensions.

Dating from 1888, Thomas Worsdell's design was a success, with the first six locomotives added to with further batches of 10 in 1891 and three more in 1897, and after grouping, the LNER added a further three in 1923. Principally found operating dockyard lines around Tyneside and Hull, the useful little loco also found favour with Darlington Works itself as two were used around the site; in the grouping era, they spread further afield with examples at Leith and Stratford. The war years also saw use in dockyards and munitions sites. In later years, 12 were sold to industries, with the two that survived beyond nationalisation lasting until 1951, with two examples in preservation at the Middleton and the Mid-Suffolk railways.

Rapido has covered the lifespan of the locomotives well, ranging from our review sample in original Saxony Green livery, NER black, NE and LNER black liveries, including a Darlington Works example, through to a BR example with an NCB livery and a preserved NER simplified green livery. There are differences within the models catered for in the tooling suite, with most models having Ramsbottom safety valves in a brass cover and later examples having Ross pop valves. The NCB version also features a timber shroud for the open cab rear to protect it from the elements. Further variations are accommodated within the accessory pack with front steps if required, dumb buffers for early examples, and later handrails for the front of the side tanks. Shunting poles were also used in some instances to pull wagons on adjacent lines and poles are included within the pack for anyone brave enough to tackle such operations in model form.

There's a respectable weight to the model for its size achieved through the diecast internal frame that the coreless motor and comparatively large brass flywheel sit within. The frame has holders on each side, one side is for the factory-fitted speaker and the other for the PCB and Next18 decoder socket. In addition to the four screws shown in the decent instruction leaflet, it might be necessary to release the small clip under the front of the smokebox to release the body if you require access. As the gearbox drives down to the rear axle through the firebox area, there's no space for flickering firebox effects on this model.

Our review model is probably the one that shows the decoration standards best, too, with its black and white lining to the boiler banks and tank sides with very fine white lining to the wheels in addition to the cab interior, including the water gauges.

For its size, Rapido's model is a surprising performer with the capability to haul seven Mk. 1 coaches with minimal slippage on starting; it's very quiet, any noise being drowned out by the noise of the stock behind and it's also silk-smooth, a great motor and drive, and I would place this in the top three best running small steam models I've owned or reviewed.

Available in analogue or digital sound versions, the model has sold out at Rapido but is currently available through its stockists.

It's not immediately obvious where the coal bunker is on these tiny locos; it was hand-filled through the hatch at the rear of the side tanks.

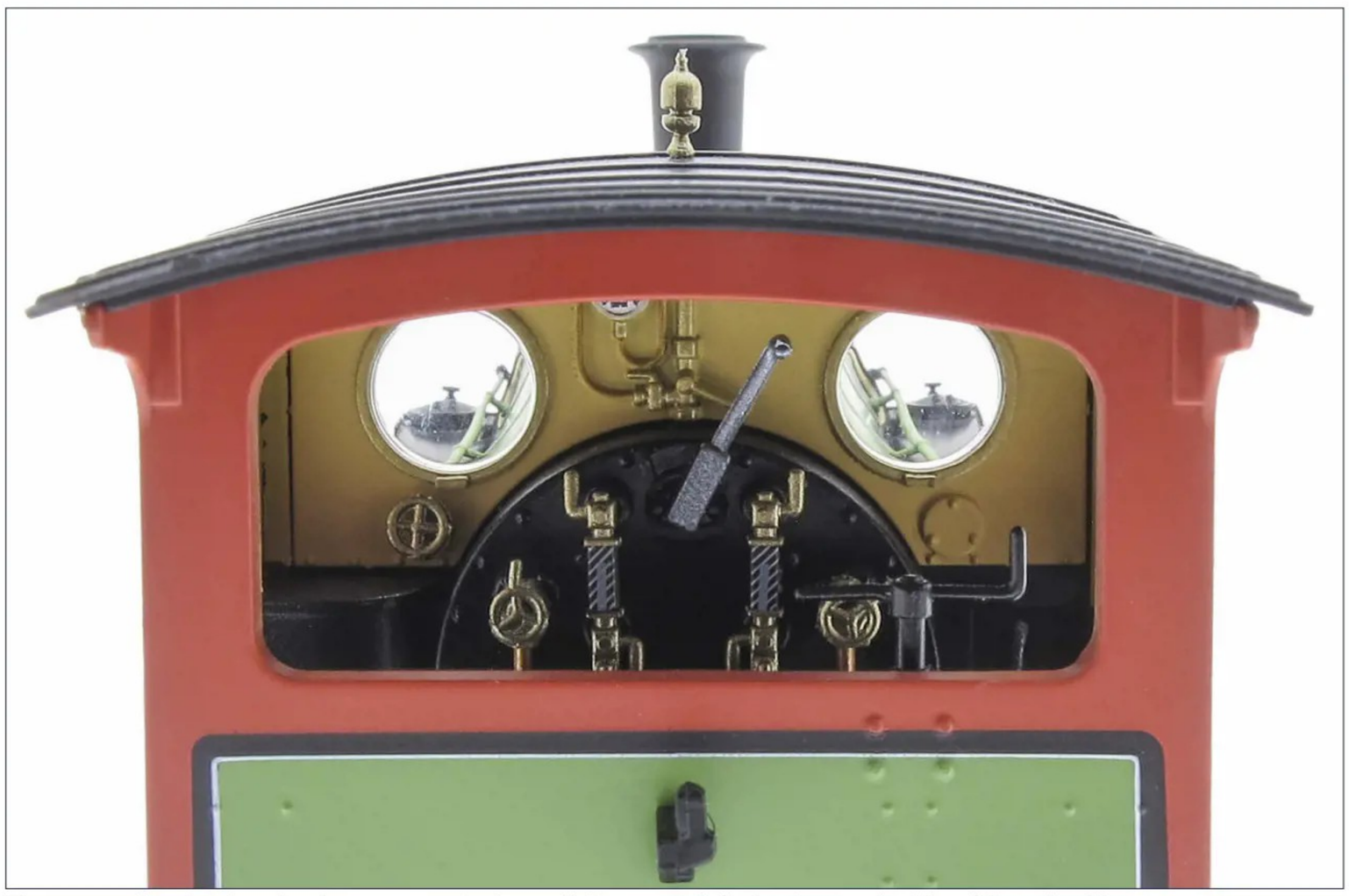
Packing a respectable weight into such a small model is a challenge, but Rapido has achieved excellent performance from the Y7.

FACTFILE

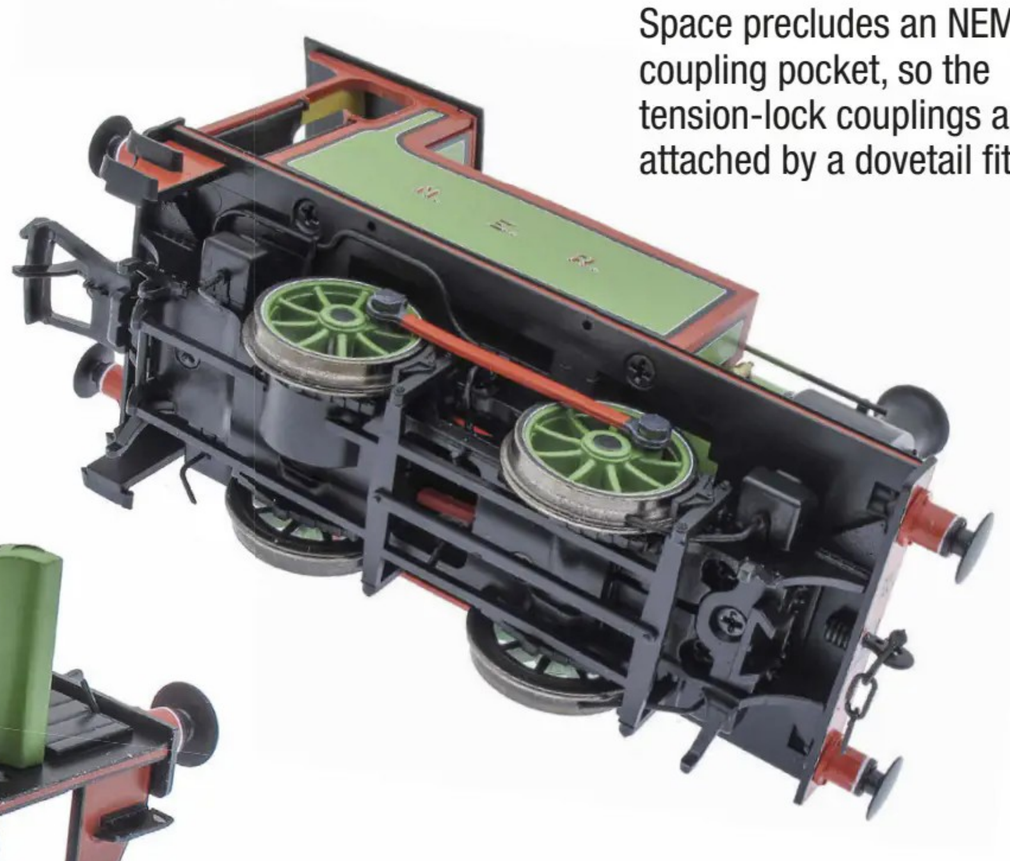
Models: (review items in bold)
NER H Class – No.24, NER Saxony Green Livery (1888)
NER H Class – No.1310 NER Simplified Saxony Green Livery (as preserved)
NER H Class – No.1303 NER Lined Black
LNER Y7 – No.129 Darlington Works Livery
LNER Y7 – No.1800 NE Wartime Livery
LNER Y7 – No.986 LNER Livery
LNER Y7 – No.1302 LNER Livery
LNER Y7 – No.6 NCB
LNER Y7 – No.68089 British Railways Livery
Era: 1888 - preservation
Construction: Diecast frame with plastic body
Weight: 94g
Price: DCC Ready - £144.95 DCC Sound - £244.95
DCC provision: Next18 socket
Minimum curves: Radius 1 (371mm)
Accessories: 3-link couplings, front steps, dumb buffers, handrails, fireman's tools and shunting poles

WHAT WE LIKE

- ✓ Weight
- ✓ Performance
- ✓ Decoration standards
- ✓ Overall cute factor



The open-backed cab gives a good view of the exquisitely decorated backhead with gauge glasses and flush-fitting front spectacle glazing.



Space precludes an NEM coupling pocket, so the tension-lock couplings are attached by a dovetail fitting.

Inside the boiler we can see the coreless motor and flywheel with a shaft drive to the gearbox over the rear axle. The PCB and decoder socket sits in the holder inside the side tank.

EFE Rail Plasser YOB 12T General Purpose Crane

Andy York

It's quite a rarity to see track plant modelled ready-to-run, so it's no surprise that EFE Rail's general-purpose crane is proving popular upon release.

Announced in Bachmann's summer quarterly announcement, this welcome addition to track plant equipment is now on sale in its EFE Rail range. Previously, we have only seen HO-scaled tampers and plant shared with Bachmann's Lilliput range, so this OO scale general purpose crane will be popular with modellers of the mid-1970s onwards.

Produced by Plasser & Theurer of Austria, these cranes are widely utilised across the network, particularly in track maintenance trains for lifting and moving rails and sleepers, and are given the TOPS code of YOB. Although the prototype crane had its own propulsion for use on-site with a rotating and extendable jib, the model is unpowered with a fixed jib. To have had any operable features would have surely escalated costs beyond the RRP of £88.95. The model is quite weighty for its size, with a diecast running plate and the equipment boxes, which are red on our review version. There are many separately-fitted details for the pipes and cables, handrails and other fittings and overall, the feel of the model is extremely robust, with even vulnerable handrails and stanchions made from a flexible plastic that does not deform. Everything on the model compares well to the real cranes except that, in all the images I've looked at, the jib side of the cab should be glazed rather than solid. The model has very convincing non-working lamps at each end of the body and below the crane for night use. Both sides of the solebar have 10 white blocks, which, in reality, would be lamps to illuminate the work area.

Our review model is in Jarvis maroon, with a jib support not present on the other models, dating it to post-privatisation until Jarvis exited their maintenance contract in 2004 following a derailment at Kings Cross, and being jointly responsible for the Potters Bar crash two years before. Bachmann markets this as Javis (sp.)/ Fastline, but there are no Fastline markings on this model as there were on some cranes. In some of the images here, the maroon looks a little plasticky but does not offend in the flesh, and the multitude of safety signs and data panels are very crisply printed.

Two other versions are available; BR yellow with red arrow logo representing their time of introduction and a later yellow version with the arrows and more modern safety warning signs.

It would have been fantastic to have a self-propelled functioning model with lights, but the price would have been somewhat fantastical, too!

FACTFILE

Models: (review items in bold)
E87047 DRP81522 BR Departmental Yellow
E87048 DRP81513 Departmental Yellow
E87049 DRP81523 Jarvis/Fastline Maroon
Era: 1975 – privatisation
Construction: Plastic body and chassis
Weight: 137g
Minimum curves: Radius 1 (371mm)
Accessories: Bufferbeam details

WHAT WE LIKE

- ✓ A useful addition
- ✓ Fine moulded detail
- ✓ Decoration and print quality

The hydraulic pipes and cables are robustly modelled with wire and plastic.

The stowed hook at the end of the jib is modelled in a fixed position with cables made from wire.

Bachmann Ffestiniog Railway 'Tin Car'

Andy York

Ffestiniog Railway Tin Cars are the latest addition to the Bachmann Narrow Gauge range, forming the perfect complement to Bachmann's Double Fairlies and Mainline Hunslets.

Bachmann Narrow Gauge has added to its Ffestiniog Railway range with models of the 'Tin Car' Saloon Third coaches. With growing demand in the late 1970s, the railway built more contemporary stock on six sets of frames acquired from scrap, formerly from the Isle of Man Railway.

Originally known as 'Domeliners' owing to their domed roofs, the Tin Cars were employed principally on the Ffestiniog Railway but also saw occasional use on the restored Welsh Highland Railway. However, by 2018, all had been withdrawn from service. With the exception of one vehicle, which had its bodywork scrapped in 2005 before its underframe was recycled once again for use under a Barn coach, the Tin Cars remain extant – four have been sold; two each to the Golden Valley Light Railway and the Moseley Railway Trust, and the last, an observation vehicle, has been retained by the FR for Departmental use.

Our review model of No.120 is in original maroon livery with the original toilet evidenced by the frosted windows and ventilator on the roof. No.119 is available in this livery, too, with both coaches, with the same numbers, also available in later crimson and cream livery and with 120, correctly, having its toilet replaced by an additional seating bay and absence of the roof ventilator. The solebar is an integral moulding with the body capturing the rivet detail. The floor does unclip from inside the body and solebar for internal access if you wish to add passengers as the interior is readily visible through the panoramic windows. Brake pipes for the vehicle ends are included in the accessory pack, but these might foul the standard narrow gauge coupling around the tight curves that modellers often use in this scale.

Although the early maroon livery is fairly plain, the decoration with Ffestiniog crests, class numbers and the delightful 'No Smoking' signs in the window are exquisite. It's a model that will find many welcoming layouts.

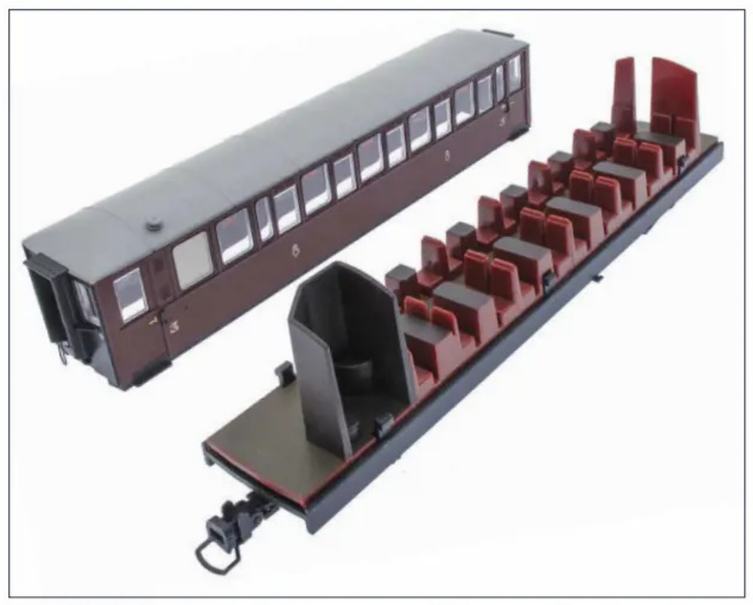
Although the decoration is relatively plain on the early livery, the model features superb railway crests and Double Fairlie shaped 'No Smoking' window signs.

FACTFILE

Models:
394-100 No. 119 FR Crimson & Cream
394-100A No. 120 FR Crimson & Cream
394-101 No. 119 FR Maroon
394-101A No. 120 FR Maroon
Era: Late-1970s - current
Construction: Diecast chassis and body with plastic detail parts
Weight: 47g
Minimum curves: Radius 1
Accessory pack: Bufferbeam piping

WHAT WE LIKE

✓ Detail decoration
✓ A useful prototype



The interior can be accessed by unclipping the body to add further decoration.

Rapido Dia. 1/191 OAA 45T Open

Dating from 1984 onwards, the Civil Link brand was used for the wagon fleet supporting engineering works departments through to privatisation.

Andy York

Rapido Trains UK has released its first 'modern' N gauge wagon, that of BR's first fully air-braked wagon. Ashford Works built the 100 new OAAs (Nos. 100000-100099) in 1971. These wagons were long for a four-wheel open, with a 20ft 9in wheelbase with upgraded running gear to cope with higher operating speeds.

The model is a very good scaling-down of the previous OO model, with an exceptional amount of underframe detail, good interior detail with internal planking to the wooden sides and a lot of moulded external detail.

The OAA model is available in triple packs with an RRP of £69.95 to give a respectable value price in six different packs in five liveries with individually numbered wagons. The early iterations are in BR Bauxite with a yellow ABN spot, highlighting that these were air-braked, and a pack without the yellow spot, which combined, are ideal for the 1970s.

Moving into the Railfreight era, there are two packs in red and grey, while our review models are in Civil Link 'Dutch' livery. The early artwork drawings showed these in plain yellow and grey but have been amended to include the engineers lettering with 'Squid' fish-kind names on the bodysides. Their story runs through into the privatised era with a set of EWS maroon and yellow-striped examples as wagons that lasted into the new century.

As these wagons could be found singularly and also in multiple in trip and Speedlink services, there are few modellers of this era who could not find good reason to include some in appropriate workings.

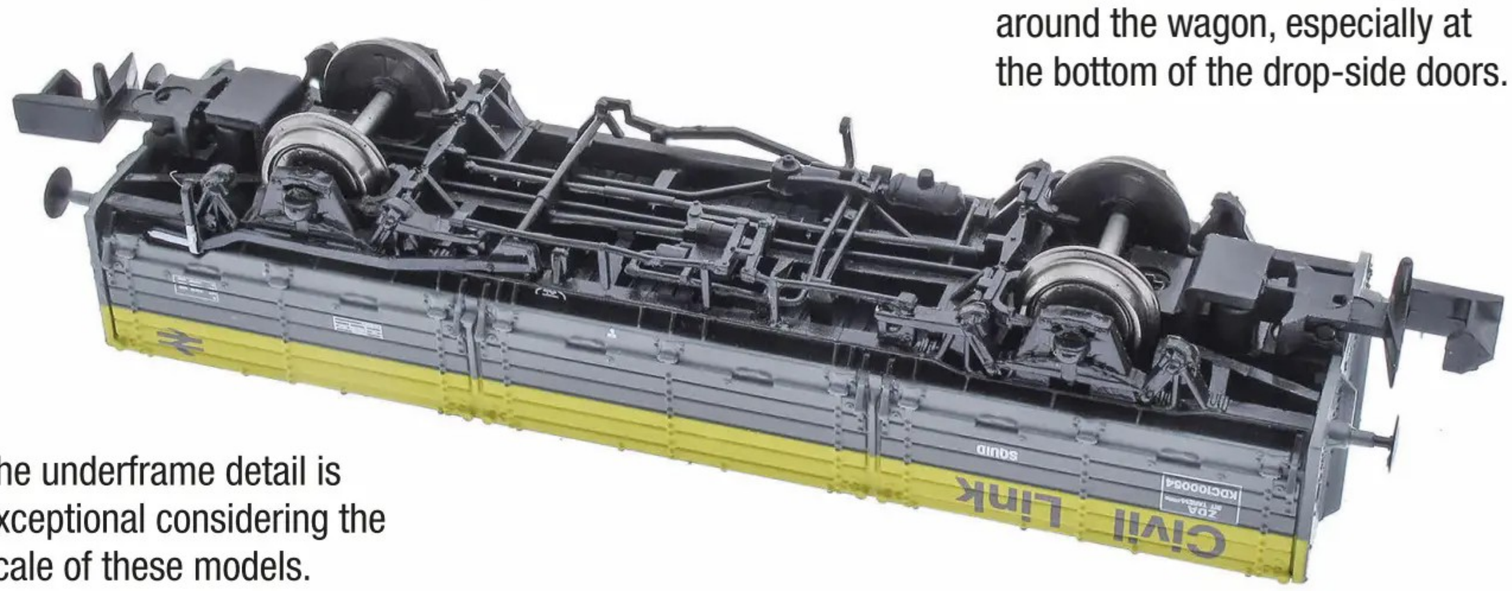
FACTFILE

Models:
OAA Triple Pack – Bauxite with ABN yellow spot
OAA Triple Pack – Bauxite
OAA Triple Pack – Railfreight Pack 1
OAA Triple Pack – Railfreight Pack 2
OAA Triple Pack – Civil Link
OAA Triple Pack – EWS
Era: 1971 - privatisation
Construction: Plastic body and diecast chassis
Weight: 16g
Minimum curves: Radius 1 (371mm)
Accessories: All fitted

WHAT WE LIKE

- ✓ Underframe detail
- ✓ Door detail
- ✓ Print quality
- ✓ Triple pack value

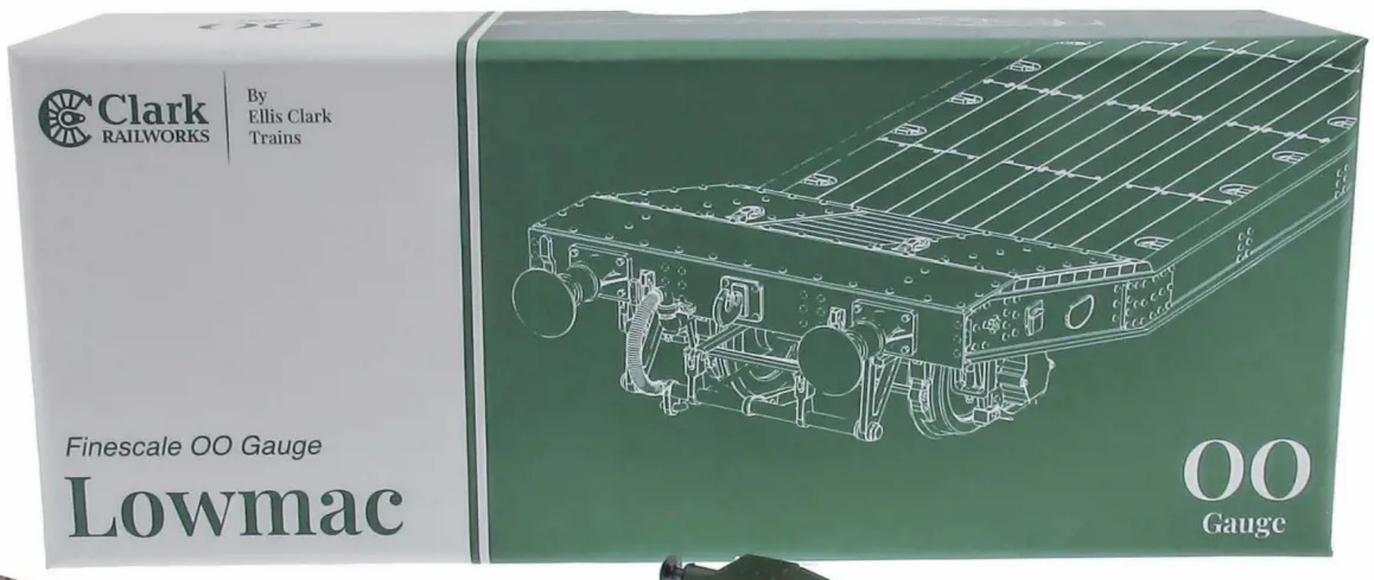
Fine detail can be found right around the wagon, especially at the bottom of the drop-side doors.



The underframe detail is exceptional considering the scale of these models.

Planking details to the floor and sides of the wagon can be seen inside, important on such an open wagon.

Clark Railworks 25T 'Lowmac'

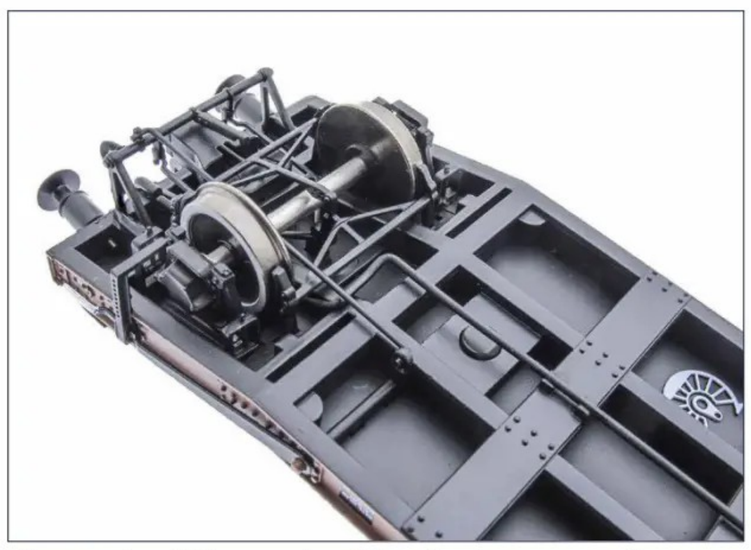


Andy York

A new brand and new packaging to look out for! Clark Railworks' first OO gauge model is the 25T Diagram 173 'Lowmac' and a superb entry into the market it is.

The shackle points and tie rings are separately-fitted parts and, with care, these can be posed to assist in tieing down loads.

OO gauge modellers will, undoubtedly, be aware of the Ellis Clark name but Ellis has created a new brand for the first OO gauge products, Clark Railworks. The old phrase "you can only make a first impression once" came to mind when first unpacking the parcel; each wagon in a protective plain box (except it's branded on the inside), followed by logo-branded wrapping paper before you even get to the sturdy box shown above with a foam lining for the model and accessory pack. For me, quality packaging and information say that the business is proud of its products and values the customer's experience. What is inside does not disappoint either, a weighty, finely detailed and nicely-decorated model with much to commend.



The ends of the undersides feature complex detail, even down to the cranked linkage to the brake yokes.

The announcement of the Lowmac came as a surprise just a few weeks ago, at the time the similar Rapido product was arriving, and both models, with very small differences in approach, are excellent. 13 different models are available in the launch range across LNER Red Oxide, LMS Grey, BR Bauxite, BR Olive Green, BR Engineers' Grey, Yellow, Satlink and Dutch liveries with different running numbers.

The frame is diecast with a deck featuring moulded plank and bolt detail; each of the rings are separately-fitted etched parts and, with care, can be lifted to allow load securing ropes, chains, or shackles to be attached. The upper surfaces and frame sides have very clear rivet detail, with the builder's plate being a separately-fitted part that makes the print stand out better than a moulded plate.

The underside of the wagon is well-detailed, with the Clark Railworks' branding picked out in white, including brake piping and mechanisms and NEM coupling pockets.

The accessory pack includes tension-lock couplings, cosmetic screw-link couplings, vacuum and air pipe fittings for the bufferbeam, vacuum cylinders and even a set of brake sets to replace the fitted components if you wish to fit EM or P4 wheelsets.

The running qualities with the weight, pin-point axles and brass bearings are superb.

The models are available now from Clark Railworks' website or its stockists. So, Rapido or Clark Railworks? Either, or both?

FACTFILE

C3001A '260868', LNER Red Oxide
C3001B '260845', LNER Red Oxide
C3002A '700709', LMS Grey, Preserved
C3003A 'E263293', BR Bauxite
C3003B 'E278494', BR Bauxite
C3004A 'M700728', BR Bauxite, Preserved
C3005A 'DE260861', BR Bauxite, Preserved
C3006A 'ADB904504', BR Olive Green
C3007A 'DB904717', BR Olive Green
C3008A 'ADB904531', BR Engineers Grey
C3009A 'DB904502', BR Engineers Yellow
C3010A 'KDE263282', Satlink, Preserved
C3011U Un-numbered, Civil Engineers Dutch, Preserved
Era: 1944 - preservation
Construction: Diecast frame & plastic parts
Weight: 53g
Price: £40.00
Minimum curves: Radius 1 (371mm)
Accessories: bufferbeam detailing, vacuum cylinders, EM/P4 replacement brakes

WHAT WE LIKE

✓ Upper surface
✓ Etched rings for load securing
✓ Underframe detail

Also Arrived This Month...

Andy York

Accurascale Class 37 as-built with centre headcodes

Accurascale's second tranche of Class 37 releases sees the arrival of the first centre-headcode nosed 37/0 models in as-built condition with full-depth shrouds behind the buffers. D6692 in 1969 condition, allocated to Cardiff Canton is pictured. D6600 in green with small warning panels and D6956 in green with full yellow ends are in similar condition. Other models in this batch include BR 'Dutch', unbranded DRS, a DRS heritage repaint, Colas and Harry Needle liveries.

Hornby Railroad VIX Ferry Van

From tooling dating back to 1970, Hornby has re-released its ferry van in Railfreight red and grey livery with well-printed livery and additional markings at an RRP of £25.99, competing with more recent detailed models from others. The model features opening doors and swivelling axle frames to enable it run around Radius 1 curves but retains the original large couplings with no NEM coupling provision.

Hornby Mk.3 coaches in GNER livery

Hornby has released its excellent Mk.3 HST coaches with stunning decoration, including the 'Route of the Flying Scotsman' branding in the centre of each coach with the classically-styled Great North Eastern Railway crest as a transfer beneath, dating the four differently-numbered Standard coaches, one Trailer Guard Standard, one First, one First Disabled, and one Restaurant First Buffet to the 1996-2006 period on the East Coast Main Line, each priced at an RRP of £49.99, to be paired with the matching R30343 power cars (RRP (£394.99).

Hornby TT:120 BP/ Shell 12T Tank Wagon

Hornby's latest release of the 12-ton tank wagon, which is based on a 1907 Railway Clearing House standard design, features improved running qualities compared to the first batch. Also available in a beige, red and black Benzol & By-Products Limited, both wagons feature excellent decoration detail considering the scale, with the BP/Shell wagon featuring BP branding on one side and Shell on the other, a co-operative agreement for fuel transportation between the oil giants that lasted for decades. Priced at £28.99, these wagons are best suited to the pre-grouping and big-four steam eras, although Hornby states these are Era 4 on its website.

Hornby Railroad Plus Class 47 TXS sound-fitted

Andy York

Hornby has released the Railroad Class 47 in early livery form, BR green with Sherwood Green band with small yellow warning panels in both DCC-ready and Bluetooth/DCC Sound forms.

Hornby's Railroad range was always intended as a channel to produce older models at lower prices with basic features. In that context, this utilisation of Lima's 1987 tooled Class 47 fits the brief, with a DCC-ready version with an 8-pin socket marketed at an RRP of £96.99. Railroad Plus was then introduced a few years ago for models that featured more extensive decoration, such as nameplates and complex liveries, but this Class 47 is branded as Railroad Plus for a relatively simple livery application in two-tone green with small yellow warning panels plus a printed builder's plate and early electrification flashes date the model from its build in 1973 to acquiring full yellow ends around 1970.

Although the Lima tooling was quite respectable in its day, with many modellers improving and detailing it, it shows its age in basic form these days with heavy window surround mouldings and a lack of depth to the bogie features; I always felt the moulded downward curving front handrail always gave it a somewhat sad face, which is what I had when I realised that Hornby had selected a member of the class that had fixed radiator grilles rather than the Serck shutters that the Lima tooling possesses. An alternative number would have avoided this.

Our review model also features the HM7000-8TXS Bluetooth® & DCC Sound Decoder with a sugarcube and enclosure centrally-mounted in the chassis for an extra £48 on the RRP which, although basic sound, is good value. There are no lighting functions to this model as they are just mouldings, with the headcode panel just an external print rather than glazed over.

Only one bogie is driven with one wheel on each side of the bogie having traction tyres. This means the model should handle what most layout owners will put behind it while giving a reasonable model at around £100 less than competitors' more detailed and accurate offerings.

FACTFILE

Models: (review item in bold)
R30182 RailRoad Plus BR Class 47, D1683
R30182TXS RailRoad Plus BR, Class 47, D1683 (Sound Fitted)
Era: 1963 - c1970
Construction: Plastic body and chassis
Weight: 251g
Minimum curves: Radius 2 (438mm)
DCC socket: 8-pin
Accessory pack: N/a

WHAT WE LIKE

- ✓ Value for money
- ✓ Decoration

With the body removed, the Bluetooth/DCC decoder attached to the 8-pin socket with sugarcube speaker can be seen.

D1683 was built with fixed radiator grilles rather than the Serck shutters on Hornby's venerable tooling.

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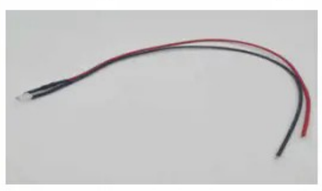
Dates for the diary...
2025 - Upcoming Exhibitions

- 08-09 February 2025 - Festival of British Railway Modeling (Doncaster Racecourse)
- 14-15 February 2025 - Burnham & District Model Railway Exhibition (Weston-Super-Mare)
- 01-02 March 2025 - Midlands Garden Rail Show (Warwick Event Centre, Lemington Spa)
- 15-16 March 2025 - The London Festival of Railway Modeling (Alexandra Palace)

Pre-Wired Flashing LED
Amber (size 3mm & 5mm)
Blue (size 3mm)



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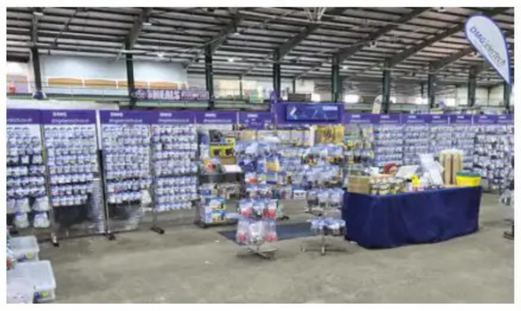

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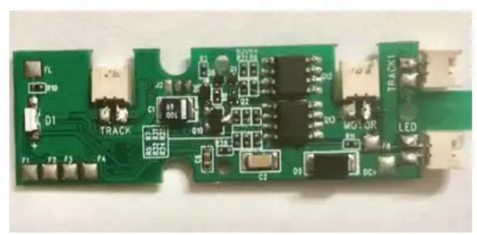

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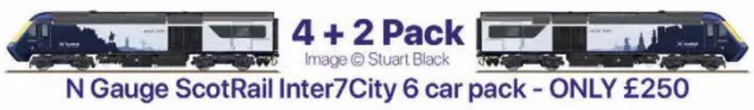

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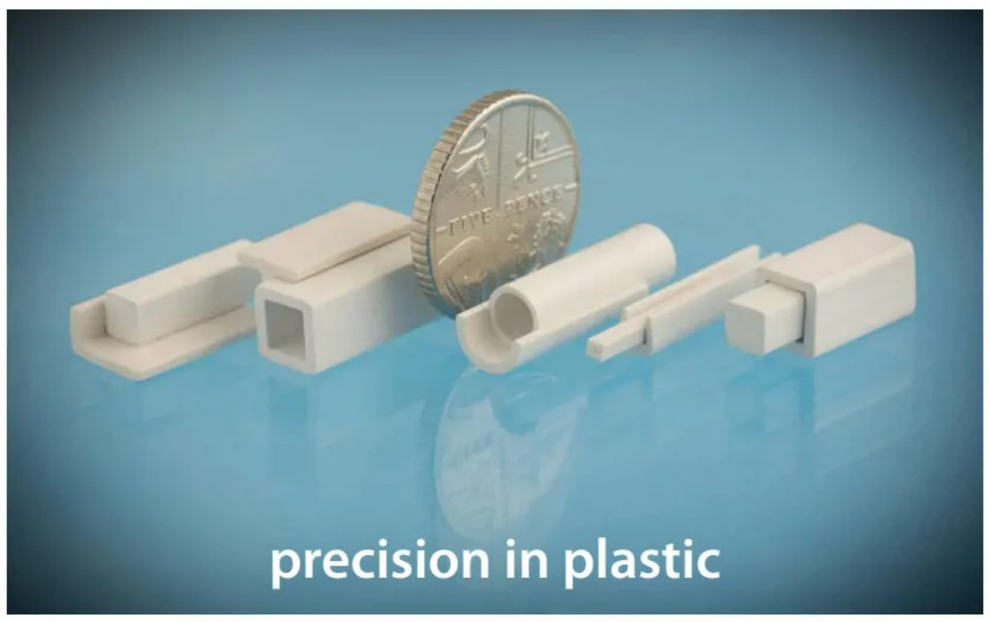

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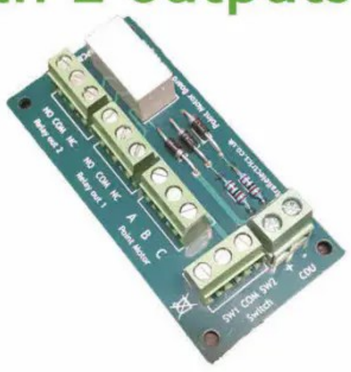

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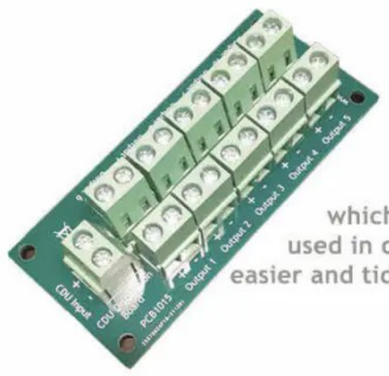

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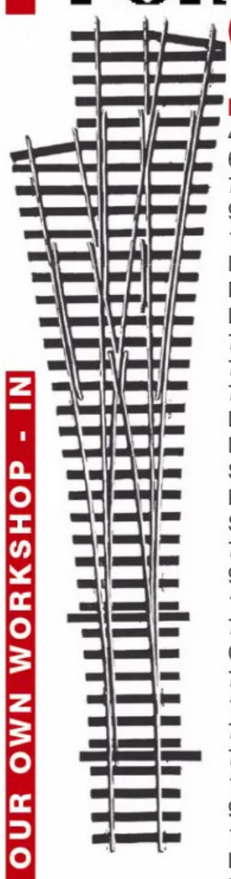

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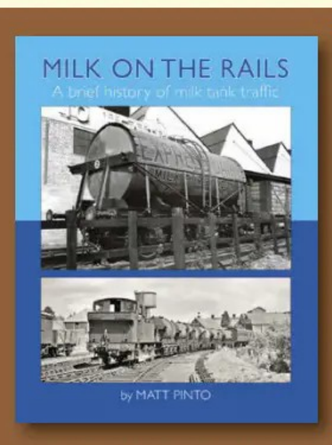

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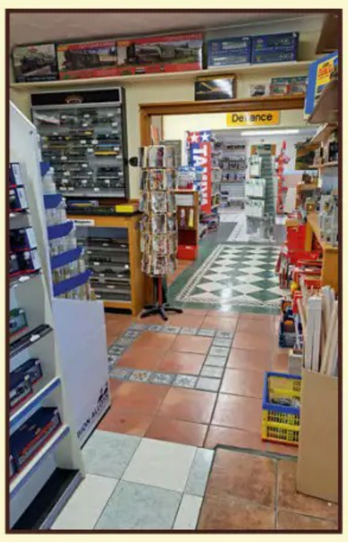

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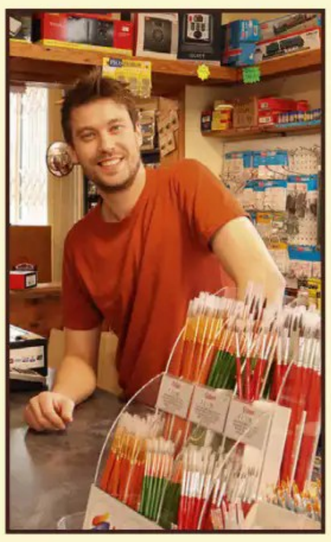

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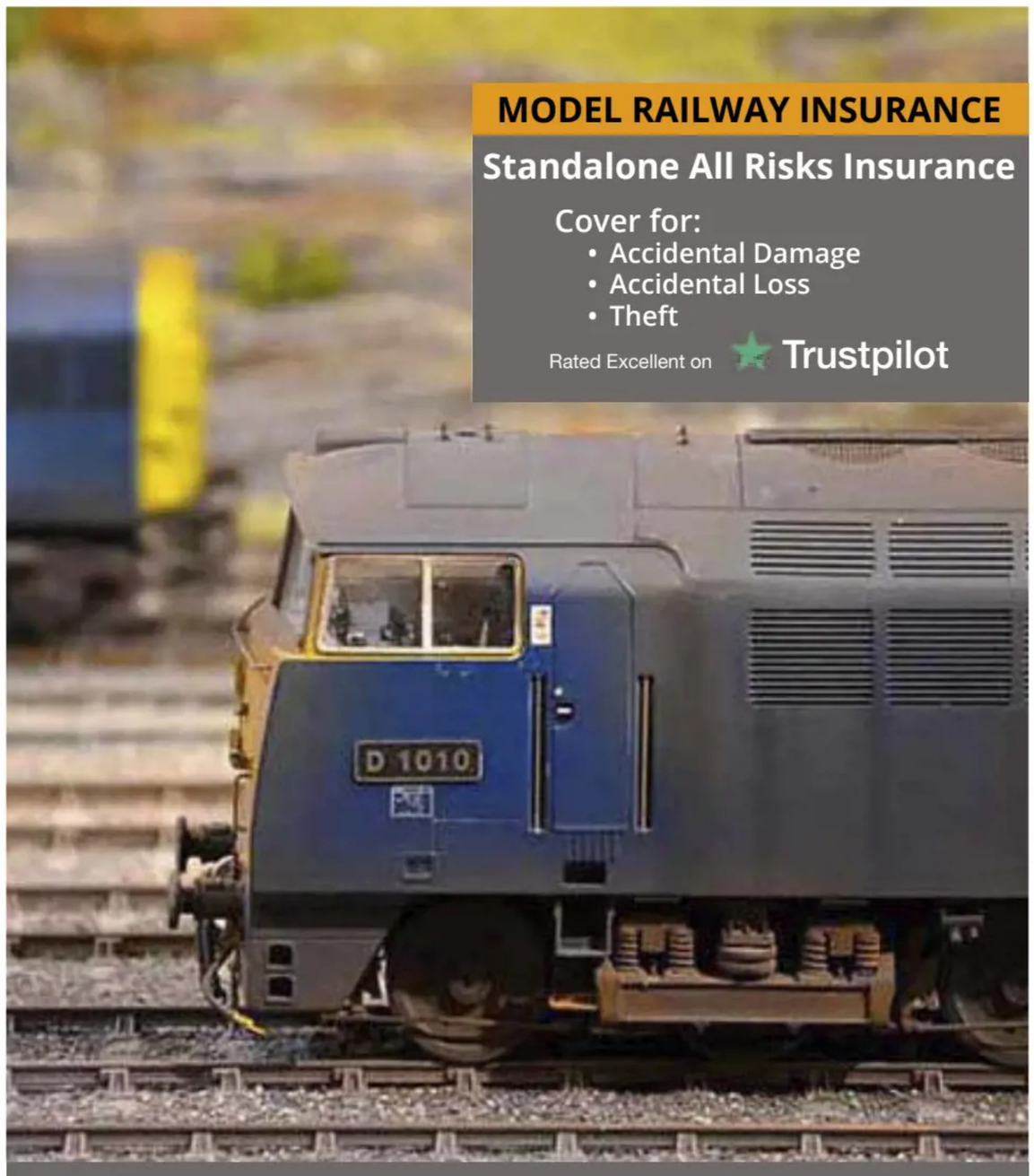
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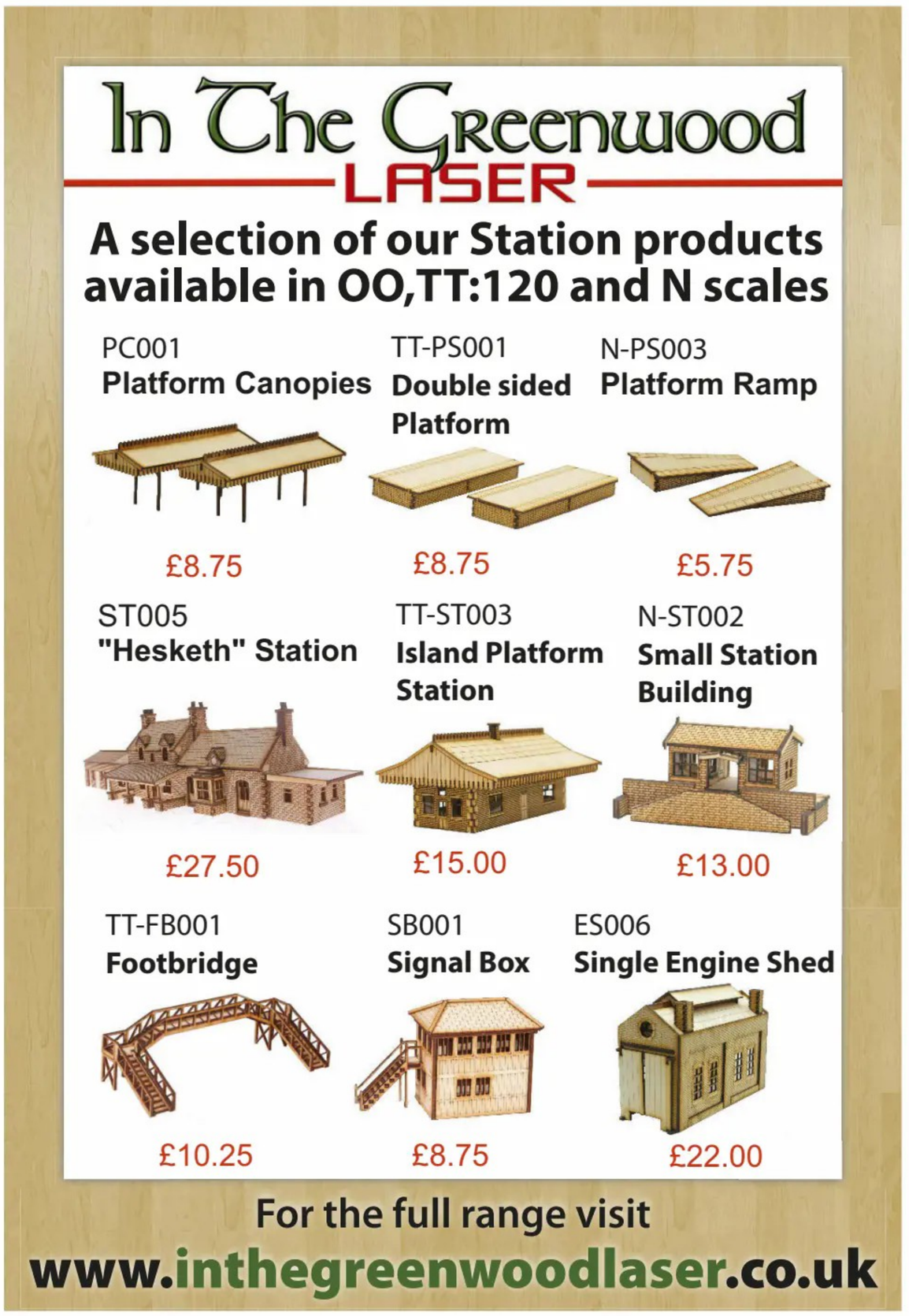
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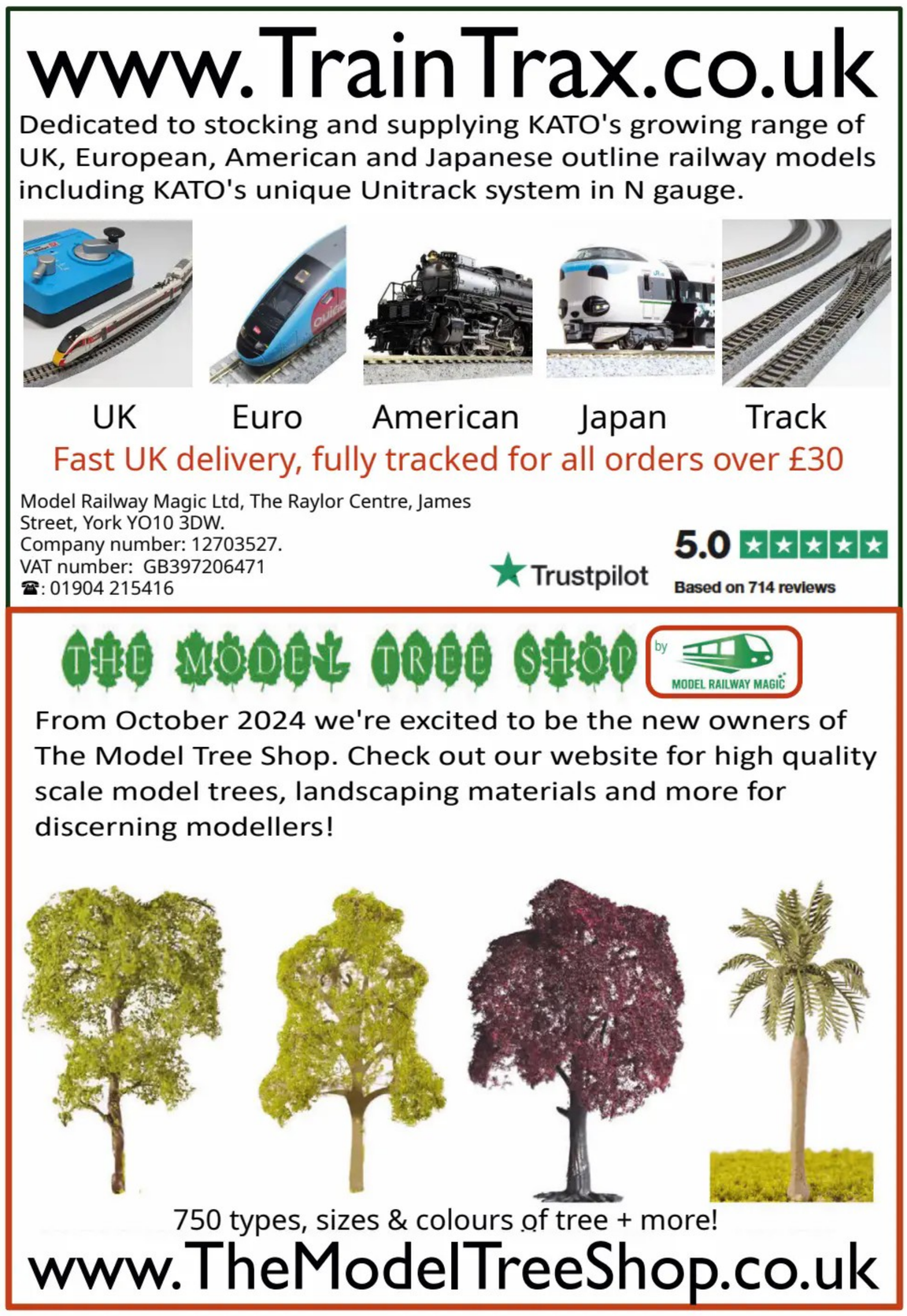
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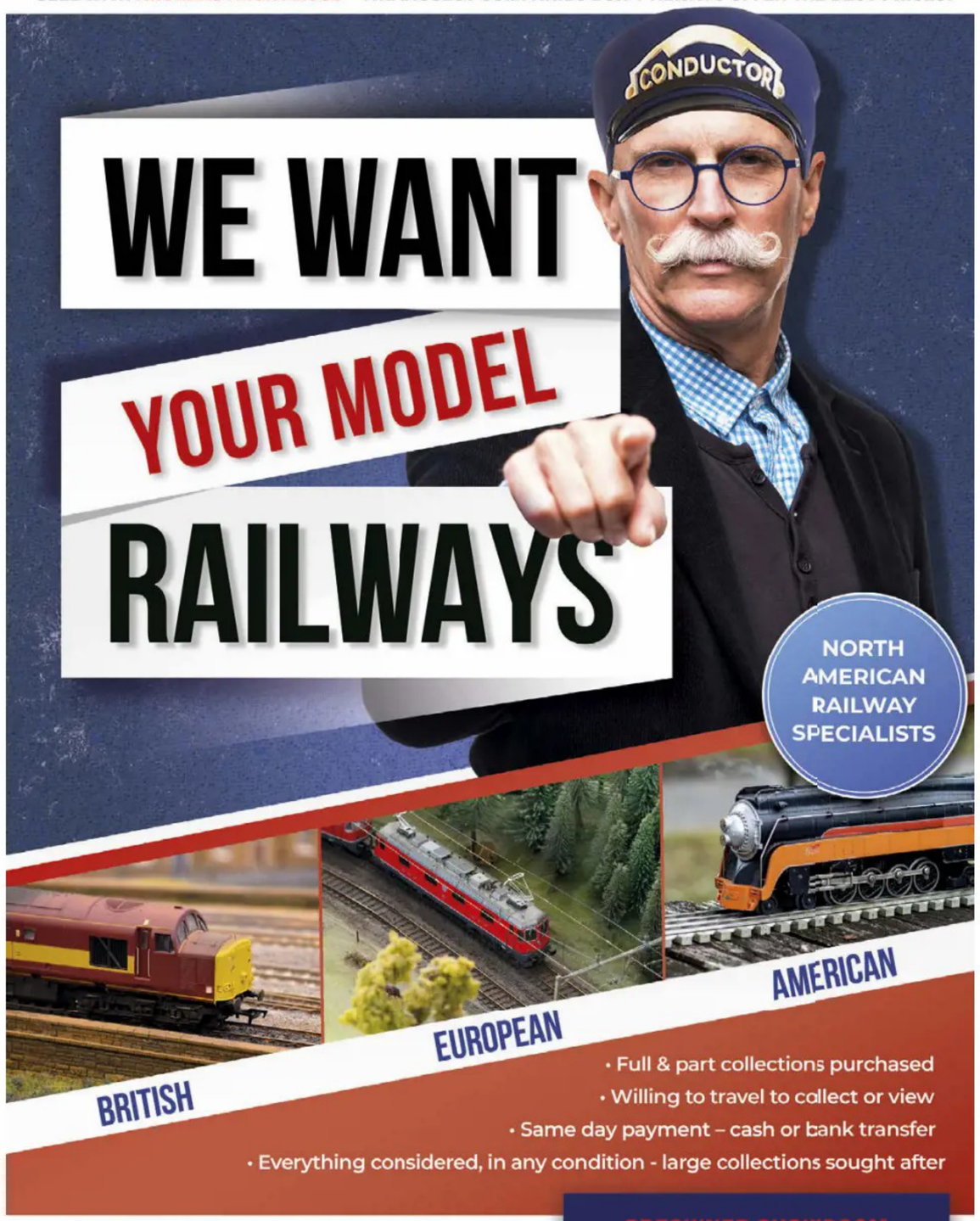

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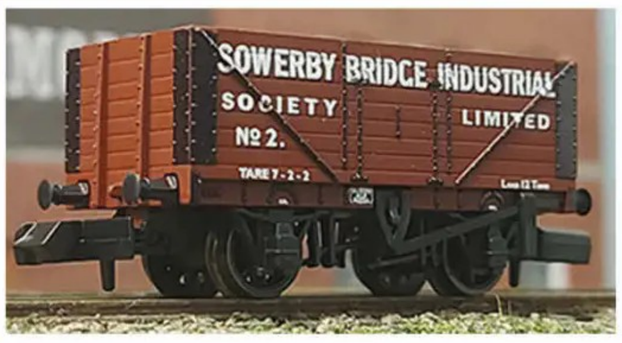

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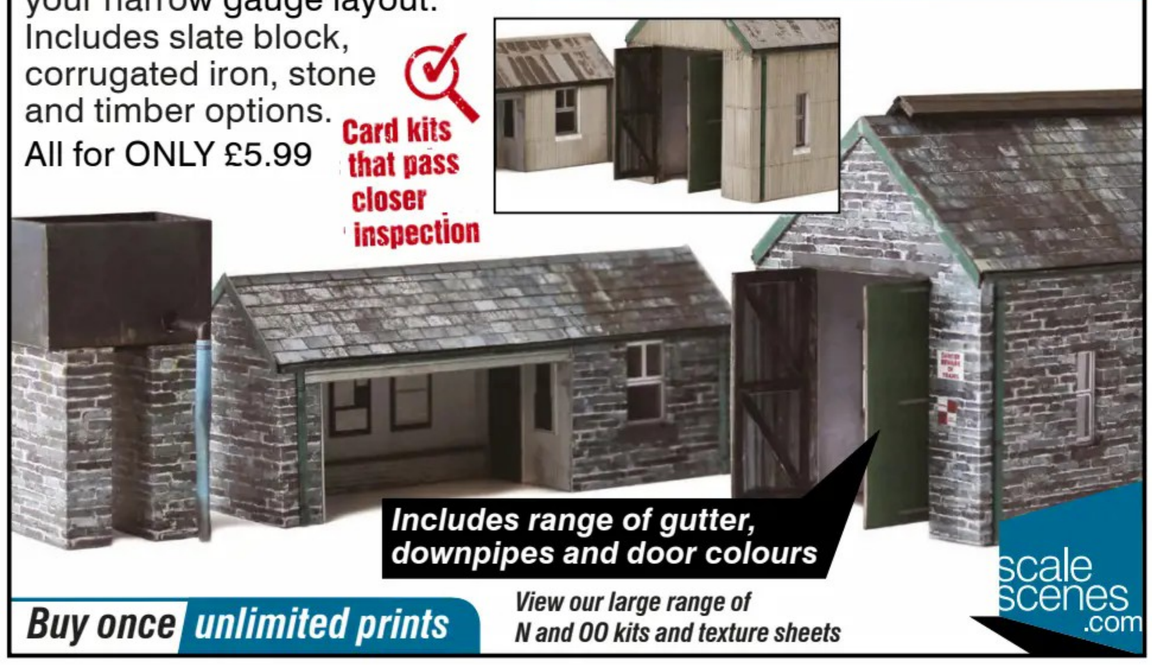

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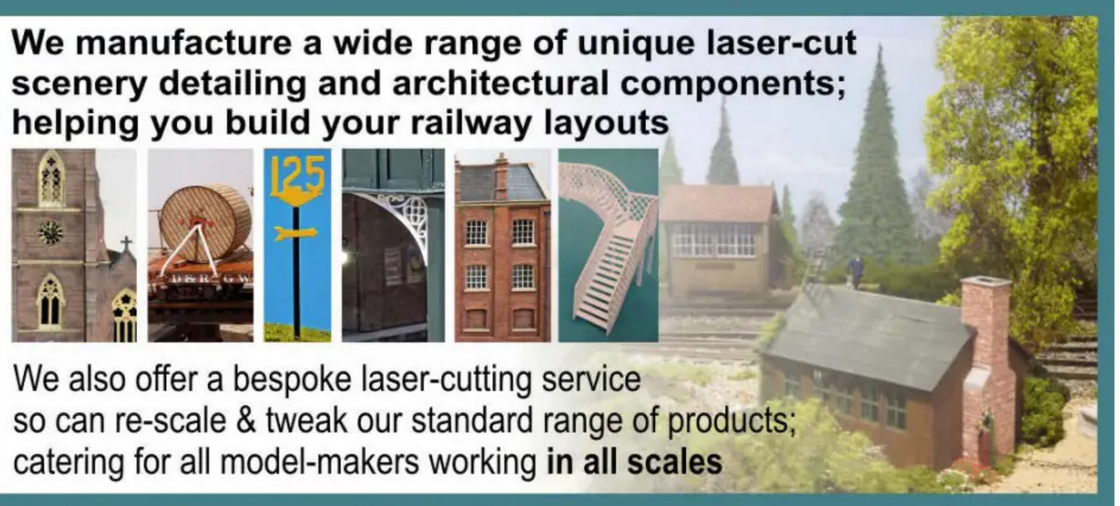

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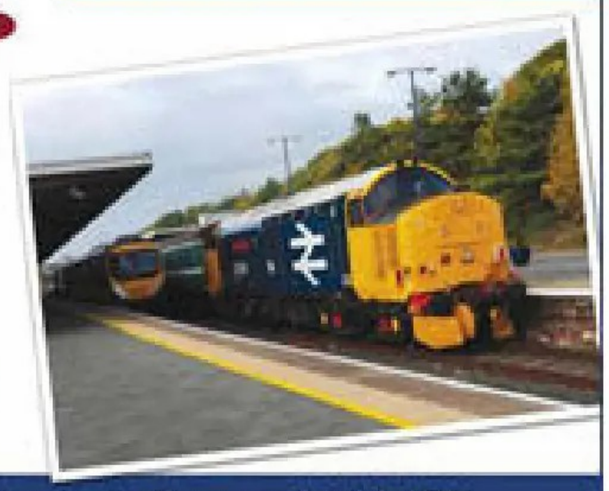

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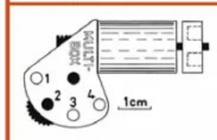

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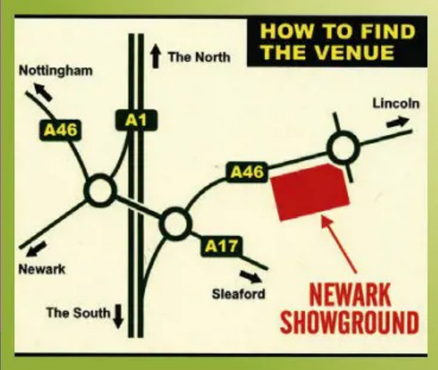

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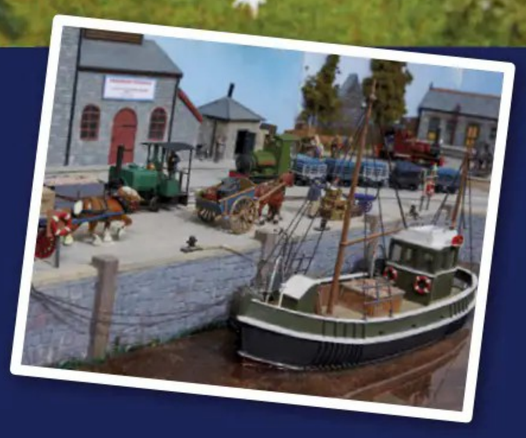

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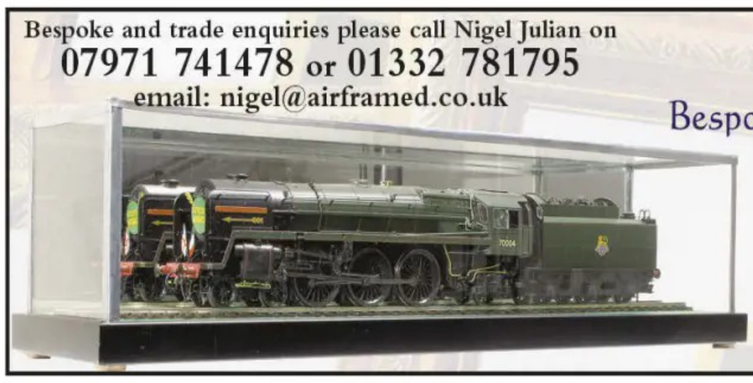

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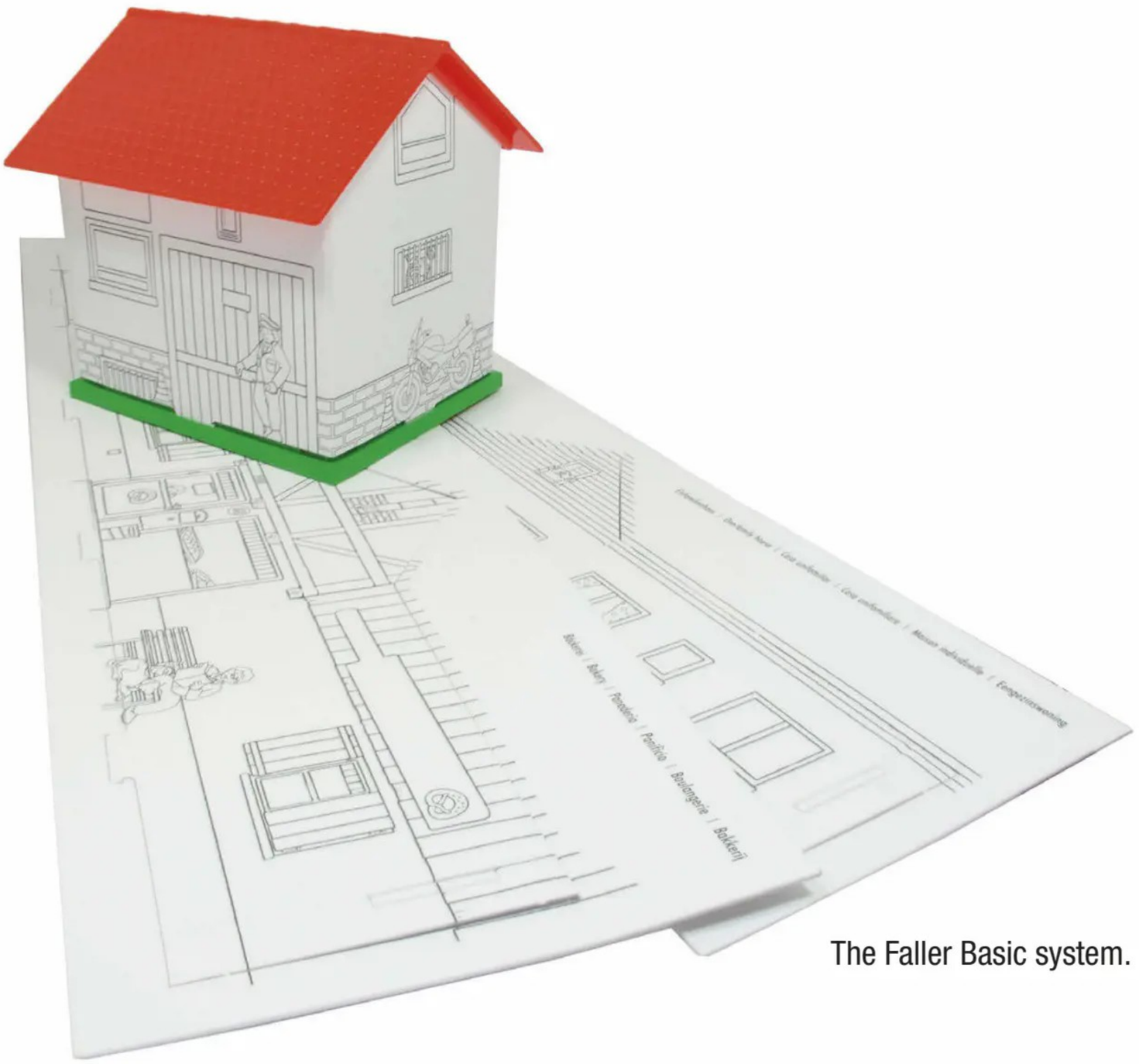


The Faller Basic system.

Most people bring back fridge magnets and postcards from their holidays, Phil returned with a Faller Basic building kit. He says that when you find a model shop, it's the law that you must buy something. We're not sure but never mind.

We've not seen this range before, but it's very clever. Each building is made up of a plastic base and roof. The walls are cardboard and can be supplied in black and white for the modeller to colour in. Price for the roof and base plus five cards – around £15.

So, youngsters (the sets are for 3 years old and upward) can "make" a building for their railway with nothing more than a set of felt-tip pens or even watercolour paints. And when they want to change the model, they simply unclip the card walls and put some new ones in.

Ingenious.

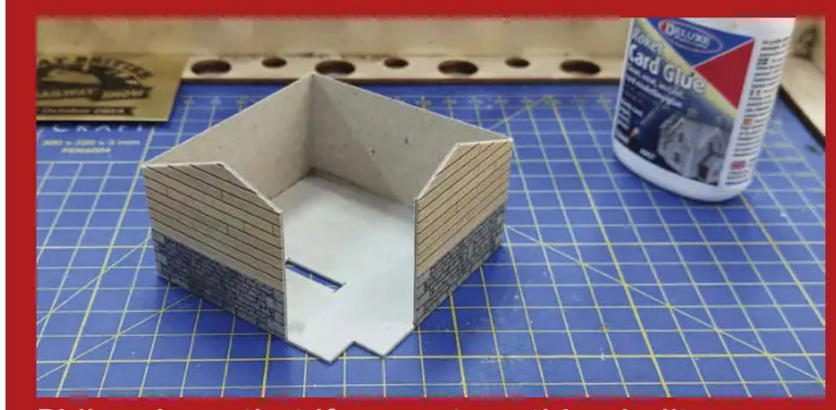
As a child, we would have loved something like this for a layout. You get a building, but more importantly, one where you can say, "I made that" - the first step towards making your own models.

Today, a Faller Basic kit, tomorrow, modelling for Pendon?

This month in pictures...

At Lauterbrunnen in Switzerland, narrow gauge trains earn their keep moving goods to communities that are only connected by rail.

Six months of rebuilding ended at the Leamington & Warwick MRS when Pete Waterman reopened their much-extended clubrooms.



Phil reckons that if you get anything built while demonstrating at a show, you haven't been talking enough. Two bits of card kit stuck together suggests plenty of chat!

Spotted at Lucerne station. Sadly, this bakers isn't part of the Bachmann trains empire, so there are no delicious review samples for us...

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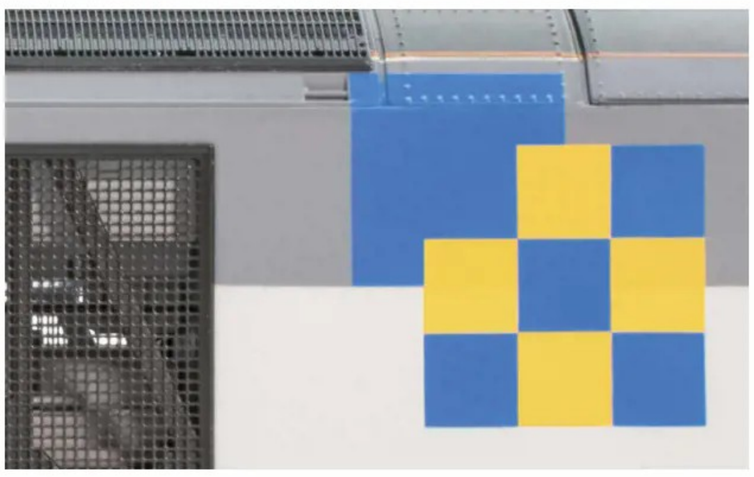

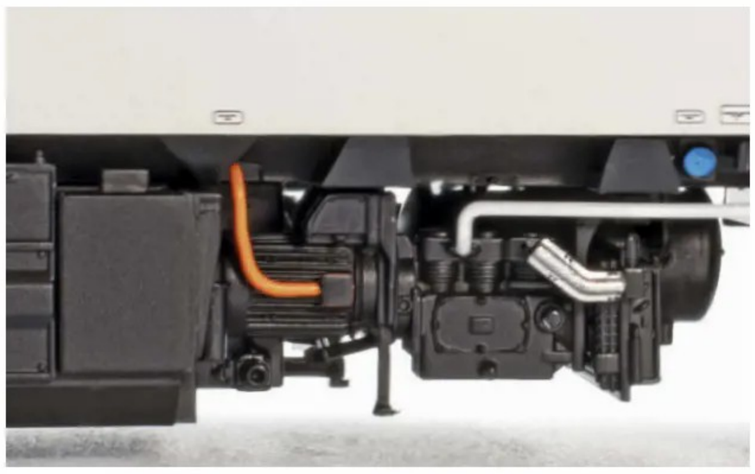

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Cover: The Bala Lake Railway welcomed yet another Quarry Hunslet to its ranks when Paul Lewin brought his 1886-built example 'Velinheli' to the line's Gala over the August bank holiday. Soon after the BLR learnt it had gained planning permission to extend into the centre of Bala itself – the full story is on page 06.
The inset is indicative of a bit of a theme in this month's NGW, looking at the long-lost metre gauge ironstone trains of the Midlands and the museum dedicated to them today.
Photos: Joey Evans and Clive Hawley

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NARROW GAUGE WORLD

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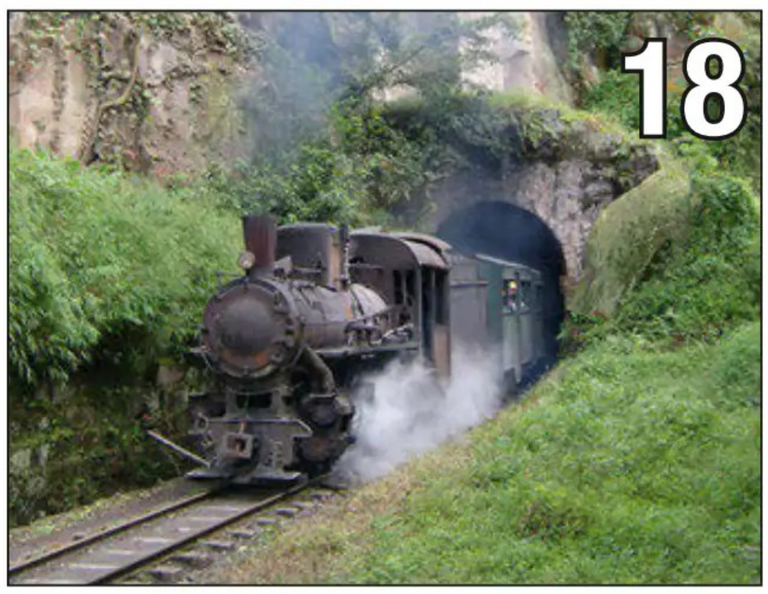

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Big plans, big locos...

Welcome to ***NGW***188 and I must start by expressing my delight that we can bring you some really good news this month. Sense has prevailed and what appeared to many to be a ludicrous reason to turn down the Bala Lake Railway's hopes of extending into Bala itself – basically it would bring more visitors to the town and they'd overpower its sewerage system, has been overcome.

After a lot of consultation, and a lot more money spent, the BLR has its planning permission. We can look forward to hopefully before too long seeing rails being placed on the nice new trackbed that was provided on top of flood defences installed next to the lake by Natural Resources Wales – funded by yet more money raised by the railway, with a lot of the donations coming from local people. When the first BLR train arrives at Bala Town Station, it can be pretty well assured of getting a warm welcome...

On the subject of extensions – in our last issue we indicated that this edition would feature the now major progress being made by a line located not too far from Bala, the Corris Railway, on the huge embankment necessary to allow it to extend south from its current headquarters at Maespoeth.

Well we have most of what we need for the feature, but we've held it for a month at the request of the railway so they can gather a little more information.

Instead this month we turn a focus on what I think is an often neglected area of UK narrow gauge history, the metre gauge lines of the Midlands ironstone industry. How many ***NGW*** readers have been to the excellent little museum at Irchester for example? We feature it this month.

There are also a fair few really big narrow gauge engines scattered throughout the pages of this issue. Now I love tiny locos – I'm a big fan of the Quarry Hunslet and the Kerr Stuart Skylark 04-2 is one of my faves (still no sign of anyone doing a new-build version of this lost class unfortunately...). But I must admit I am seriously looking forward to seeing the newly restored Kalahari 2-8-2 pounding up the gradients and round the switchback curves of the Welsh Highland Railway – in 2025 we in the UK will be able to witness a spectacle that until now we would needed to travel to South Africa to see – we are lucky people...

"In 2025 we in the UK will be able to witness a spectacle that until now we would needed to travel to South Africa to see..."

Photos: The delightful Bala Lake Railway could soon be going rather further, and Garratts are no longer the only massive 2ft gauge locos active in the UK... *Photos: Joey Evans and Chris Parry/FF&WHR*

Volunteer competition

I'm writing these words just a couple of weeks after the Gala on my own line, the Welshpool & Llanfair, an event which to me always seems to mark the turning point of the year. The end of the operating season approaches pretty quickly afterwards and then the off-season where so much of the real work in keeping our lines running is done.

On many occasions in the past I've extolled the virtues of getting involved in the off-season – there are so many jobs to be done and not enough volunteers to do them all, and it's a message I never tire of repeating, particularly following a conversation I had recently with a colleague whose role is partly about increasing the volunteer input to our railway.

My colleague made a very good point, in that the problem goes well beyond the fact that fewer people like to volunteer these days – unlike the pioneer days of preservation where it was seen as a bit of an adventure particularly amongst the younger enthusiasts.

No, what makes the issue more pressing today is that we are now facing competition for the dwindling volunteer resource from organisations that once never used volunteers, but are today pleading for them, such as hospitals and statutory bodies. And they can bring sophisticated recruitment strategies into play to get the people they want, making it all the more harder for our poor old heritage railways to attract sufficient numbers to keep themselves running effectively.

So I know I've said it many times before but the message never gets old – if you are able to get involved with your local heritage line, why not go for it? You may be surprised at how much fun you end up having – being on the inside of the narrow gauge is much better than simply reading about it, as many of ***NGW***'s readership will testify...

Andrew Charman

Send UK NEWS stories to Andrew Charman by email, editor@narrowgaugeworld.co.uk, or by post to 12 Maes Gwyn, Llanfair Caereinion, Powys, SY21 0BD. Tel: 01938 810592

Planners give green light to Bala's town extension

The Bala Lake Railway's long-held ambitions to run into the centre of the north Wales town moved a step closer on 4th September when Snowdonia National Park's planning authority granted planning permission for extension of the line.

The permission allows the 600mm gauge line to be extended by around 1200 metres from its current remote terminus at Pen y Bont, the former Bala Junction standard gauge station on the opposite side of the lake to Bala, to a new location close to the High Street in the centre of the town.

The green light was given at the second time of asking – the initial proposal, which cost the BLR £250,000, was rejected by National Park planners in April 2023 on the basis that there could be no certainty that additional tourists drawn to Bala by the BLR would not contravene Welsh Government legislation on sewage levels.

The rejection caused much controversy, particularly in Bala where the plans have gained widespread support from businesses, residents and the town's MP. As the BLR raised an estimated £100,000 needed to resubmit the application, after consulting with relevant authorities on addressing the issues that caused the first refusal, Bala residents even took part in a 'spinathon', adding close to £11,000 to the fund.

A further boost came when Welsh Water determined that the town's water treatment works could cope with any increased phosphate levels generated by extra visitors, removing a major hurdle.

Reacting to the planning approval the Bala Lake Railway Trust stated that after more than ten years of speculative work, the dream of being able to build the railway into Bala has become a reality.

The permission comes with a raft of conditions which will have to be satisfied before work commences but BLR personnel say it is exciting to know that this is now definitely going to happen.

Trackbed waiting

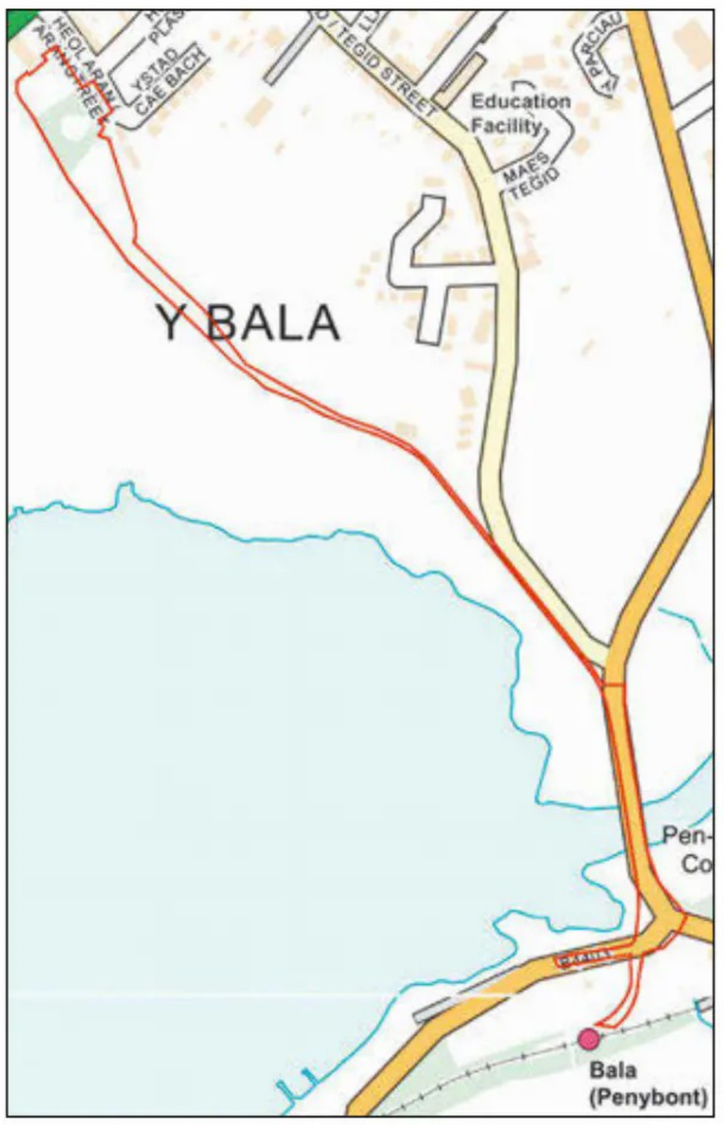
Some physical work has already been carried out – supporters raised £277,000, including £80,000 in one month, to fund the inclusion of a trackbed for the BLR on top of flood defences carried out adjacent to the lake by Natural Resources Wales.

Bala Lake Railway Trust chairman Julian Birley described the decision as "a very exciting day here in Wales" and expressed sincere thanks to everyone who has supported the line both financially and morally in something that until now was completely speculative. "Without that support this would all still be and remain a dream – that belief in us and the project is what kept us all going and we will never forget that," Julian added.

Above: Bala is virtually invisible in the background behind quarry Hunslet 0-4-0ST 'Velinheli' on 24th August, but hopes are rising that the line will soon run into the centre of the north Wales town. ***Photo: Joey Evans***

Below left: Just awaiting the rails: A trackbed already exists on top of new flood defences adjacent to the lake. ***Photo: BLR***

Below: Map of the extension route. ***Map: BLR***



Two big locomotives emerge into the limelight

Two of the largest locomotives on the 2ft gauge have both made their public debuts in preservation in recent weeks.

The Welsh Highland Railway's newly restored South African Railways 'Kalahari' NG15 2-8-2 no 134 made its first moves under steam on 11th September, ahead of its appearance at the line's Superpower Gala a week later. The loco, comparable to the WHR's signature articulated Garratts in size, will undergo a number of running-in and gauging trials over the rest of the year before an expected entry to service in 2025.

Project leader Adrian Strachan described 134's return to steam after 30 years as a momentous day, adding; "The volunteers and staff involved in the rebuild can be very proud that it looks so good and performed very well during the first test moves."

Adrian added that modifications to the NG15 for service on the WHR had been few; "Strictly speaking the loco could run as it was in South Africa, as we don't have any curves less than 50 metres on the WHR main line – there are some sharper curves in the Boston Lodge carriage shed so we have made some modifications to meet those requirements."

The major changes centre on the fact that the loco will run as often in reverse as forwards, which it did not do in South Africa. "We have centered the dome on the boiler whereas it was historically at the front – this gives us an inch and a half of additional water margin for the fireman to mortgage on a return journey up the steep hill in Beddgelert Forest.

"We have also improved the safety of the cab design by extending the floor to remove the fallplate in the original, enclosing the space with doors, and also modified certain key controls so they operate in the same manner as our NGG16 Garratts".

Meanwhile further south the Vale of Rheidol Railway's Summer Steam Festival over the August Bank Holiday weekend saw a first appearance since being secured for preservation of an equally enormous loco, Gwalior Bagnall Pacific no NM762 (2460).

The 4-6-2 was built in 1932 and worked on the Gwalior Railway in central India, regarded as the longest 2ft gauge line in the world until its conversion to the 5ft 6in Indian broad gauge in 2020.

NM762 and its sister NM765 were saved for preservation by enthusiast Peter Rampton and joined what later became known among enthusiasts as 'Collection X' and eventually the Vale of Rheidol Heritage Collection – this collection incidentally also includes an NG15 Kalahari 2-8-2.

Following the Festival the Gwalior Pacific was returned to storage at the VoR with the line stating it would announce future plans for both it and its sister at a later date. Indications given to ***NGW*** at the opening of the line's museum in May suggested that one of the two will be the next exhibit restored for static display.

Photos: Chris Parry/FFWHR (above) and Andrew Simmonds (below)

Lynton plans shed for heritage carriage fleet

The Lynton & Barnstaple Railway has submitted a planning application to Exmoor National Park Authority to build a carriage shed at its Woody Bay base.

The application for the single-road shed, on the 'wall' headshunt siding, will provide undercover accommodation for the line's five-strong heritage carriage set.

The line's long-term programme of reconstruction of the original carriages using parts rescued from local gardens and farms resulted in the first two running on the L&B in 2013. These were followed by three more in subsequent years, all constructed at the Trust workshop in Essex.

The quality and craftsmanship of the carriages was recognised by the presentation of the 2018 Morgan Award by the Heritage Railway Association, and in 2023 Charles Summers, founder and leader of the project, was awarded the British Empire Medal for his work in recreating these heritage vehicles.

The carriages are currently stored outside and in the harsh Exmoor climate extensive spot-repainting and varnishing is necessary each year. "We currently have a team of four volunteers who are continuously employed at Woody Bay trying to keep pace with the necessary maintenance including a planned repair and repaint for each vehicle every four years in rotation," the L&B Trust told ***NGW***.

"The Trust recognises that our heritage fleet is the 'jewel in our crown' and that we have a duty of care to the fleet and to the grants, donations and legacies which keeps them and other L&B assets in good order."

Readers can view the planning application documents at https://www.lynton-rail.co.uk/news/view/proposed-carriage-shelter-planning-application

Above: The Lynton & Barnstaple is making moves to protect its superb rake of bogie carriages, four of which were pictured behind newly-named Bagnall 4-4-0T 'Sir George Newnes' on 16th August. *Photo: Josh Brinsford*

Positive response to L&B's local consultation over extension plans

The Lynton & Barnstaple Railway is pressing ahead with plans for a half-mile extension to its current running line, reported in ***NGW***187, with the intention being to submit a planning application before the end of 2024.

The plans, agreed following proposals put to members of the L&B Trust, will see the line extended from its current limit of operations at Killington Lane to a terminus at Cricket Field Lane just outside the village of Parracombe,

The railway recently undertook engagement sessions in Parracombe with the Parish Council on 9th July and residents via two additional drop-in sessions at the village hall on 12th and 13th July. Comments on the proposals were also invited via a webform and email.

Following the exercise a Trust spokesman said that all the comments and feedback received had been genuinely appreciated. "We have carefully considered their contents and they have helped shape our thinking as we finalise the application," he added.

Following the sessions the Trust prepared a summary document providing answers to the questions asked, a set of guiding principles for future development of the railway and a list of additional outcomes from the meetings.

NGW readers can download the document at https://www.lynton-rail.co.uk/news/view/cricket-field-lane-proposal-engagement-summary

Dougal overhaul gathers pace in Kent

Volunteers from the Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway (W&LLR) and Sittingbourne & Kemsley Light Railway (SKLR) have been making good progress on the overhaul of Barclay 0-4-0T 'Dougal' at the SKLR site in Kent.

The 1946-built loco arrived at the SKLR workshop earlier in 2024 on a four-year loan, with the first two years planned to involve the required works to return this popular engine to steam.

The project allows volunteers from both organisations to share skills and experience whilst giving the W&LLR's south-east based volunteers the opportunity to engage with a project without the need for lengthy travel to Wales.

The loco has now been stripped down to allow a thorough assessment of the boiler ahead of its overhaul. The boiler and smokebox were lifted from the frames, with various components including regulator and washout plugs being removed to allow the best possible assessment to be made.

Welshpool and Sittingbourne volunteers have been working together to strip 'Dougal' down for overhaul. *Photo: SKLR*

■ **Franco-Belge 0-8-0T 699.01 'Sir Drefaldwyn' was the star of the Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway's traditional late-summer Steam Gala on 30th August to 1st September, the loco appearing in its newly finished final paintwork following the completion of a long overhaul, pictured here during the Saturday evening photo session at Llanfair Caereinion alongside Beyer, Peacock 0-6-0T 'The Earl'. The Gala also featured Mitsubishi diesel loco DL-34, on loan to the Mid-Wales line from the Alishan Forest Railway in Taiwan.** ***Photo: James Brett/W&LLR***

Manx Douglas gets its boiler back

The project by the Isle of Man Steam Railway Supporters Association to carry out a cosmetic restoration of the line's 1896-built Beyer, Peacock 2-4-0T 'Douglas' passed a milestone on 7th August when the boiler of the locomotive was lifted back into the frames at Douglas shed.

The engine is considered one of the most original locomotives on the IOMSR fleet – last steamed in 1953, it was stored until 2020 when it was moved to the line's engineering headquarters as part of a programme to decontaminate the stored locos of asbestos, mainly boiler cladding.

The Supporters Association announced its plans to cosmetically restore the loco in January 2023, following a successful exercise with 1874-built classmate 'Mona'.

Restoration of Douglas is continuing in the IOMSR running shed. ***Photo: IOMSRSA***

W&L probes Wickham incident

The Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway has launched an investigation into a derailment suffered by the line's Wickham personnel carrier during the Gala on 1st September.

The vehicle, which dates from 1940 and is the line's only pre-preservation item of motive power apart from the two Beyer, Peacock 0-6-0T steam locomotives, was being demonstrated at the event shortly after midday when it left the track close to the Tanllan carriage sheds at Llanfair Caereinion.

Four W&L personnel were travelling on the vehicle at the time and suffered injuries, one of them requiring hospital treatment.

In a statement the W&LLR said that trains were suspended for an hour while the incident was attended to; "We immediately informed our two regulatory bodies the RAIB (Rail Accident Investigation Branch) and ORR (Office of Rail and Road) of the incident. We have also started our own internal investigation into the incident."

The railway also praised the professional and timely manner in which staff dealt with the issue whilst keeping visitors informed of the situation.

"There was no damage to railway infrastructure and our passenger trains were unaffected apart from a delay to operations whilst our staff dealt with the incident," the statement added.

Below: The Wickham Trolley, pictured here in 2010 with *NGW* editor Andrew Charman aboard, is a popular part of the W&LLR's heritage fleet. ***Photo: Rosemary Charman***

BRIEF LINES

Wren spotting at the Bridge

The Vale of Rheidol Railway's Kerr Stuart Wren 0-4-0ST no 3114, built in 1918, spent the month of August 'outshopped' at the line's Devil's Bridge station, where it was employed on offering Driver Experience opportunities to awaiting passengers.

Photo: Andrew Simmonds

Laxey lacking a run

The Great Laxey Mines Railway in the Isle of Man was forced to restrict services to a short part of its route for several weeks in summer following the discovery of a partially collapsed culvert under the track, close to the tunnel that takes the 19-inch line under a major road.

Volks enjoys late-night runs

Members of the Volks Electric Raailway's supporting group VERA have found much success with monthly late-night running. The volunteers have been staffing the trains of the commercially-run line themselves and proceeds have been put towards buying tools and other equipment for the 2ft 8½-inch line, the oldest operational electric railway in the world.

CCLR marks German link

The Cleethorpes Coast Light Railway named its newly returned to service 0-8-2 diesel no 5 'Königswinter' at its Steam Festival weekend on 13th-14th July, the 15-inch gauge line celebrating the northeast coastal resort's twinning relationship with the German town, whose Mayor performed the ceremony with the Mayor of North East Lincolnshire.

Your railway not featured in these pages? Then send in your latest news – copy and pictures can be sent digitally to editor@narrowgaugeworld.co.uk or by post to 12 Maes Gwyn, Llanfair Caereinion, Powys SY21 0BD

All change at Kemsley Down

Visitors to the Sittingbourne & Kemsley Light Railway will find a different look to the 2ft 6in gauge Kent line's Kemsley Down headquarters, following an eventful year which has involved volunteers from Network Rail and close work with the paper mill that the line was built for.

Following the departure in March of Peckett 0-4-0ST 'Bear' to Buckinghamshire Railway Centre, the line's other standard gauge exhibit 'No.1' (Barclay Fireless 1876 of 1925, formerly of Bowaters Northfleet Mill), to be lifted and rotated to its new resting place.

Teams of Network Rail volunteers have since removed the vacant standard gauge track and replaced it with 2ft 6in gauge track. As well as making a start on rubbing down the paintwork on No.1, ahead of a repaint. They also cleared the sidings around the 2ft 6in gauge Bowaters fireless loco, Bagnall 0-4-0 'Unique' (2216/1924).

An opportunity to improve Unique's location arose as a result of celebrations of 100 years of Kemsley Paper Mill by operator DS Smith Ltd. The company hired the railway, running the first trains for mill staff since the Bowaters Railway closed in 1969, and also requested the attendance of Kerr Stuart 0-4-2ST 'Melior' at an event at the Appleyard social club grounds in Sittingbourne on 13th July.

The railway arranged for the required low-loader to attend a day early to perform an unusual shunt – Unique was dragged out of the back siding and pushed onto the exchange siding by Kerr Stuart 0-4-2ST 'Premier' where the low-loader winched the loco aboard and moved it to the re-gauged plinth track, where it was unloaded.

"It wasn't until Unique and No.1 were next to each other that we really appreciated the size of the Bagnall loco – We had always said that 'Unique' was really a standard gauge engine with the wheels inside the frames," S&K chairman Liz Fuller commented.

Melior was then winched onto the low-loader for the trip to the event. "Melior looked quite strange standing in a field next to a fire engine but acted as an excellent draw for those attending the event," Liz said, adding that both of the line's 100-year old locos have seen some unusual action in this centenary year.

Above: The S&KLR's two fireless locos are now together – and the smaller one at right is the standard gauge example... ***Photo: S&KLR***

Historic structure returns to rail use at Lincs Coast Light Railway

A coal office built around the start of the 20th century at the then Great Northern Railway's Skegness station has been renovated and moved for a new life on the Lincolnshire Coast Light Railway, as part of the new station under construction at the line's South Loop terminus in the Skegness Water Leisure Park

The Old Coal Office will become an interpretation centre at the new station showcasing the history of the world's first heritage railway to be built by enthusiasts and will also tell the story of Ellis Bros (Contractors) Ltd, owners of the Water Leisure Park, Waterford and Greenacres holiday parks in the local area and which for more than 70 years, has built much of the modern housing and other amenities in Skegness, Wainfleet and district.

The wooden building was moved to Ellis Brothers' site in Lansdown Road, Skegness in 1947 by the company's founders and used at offices until 2023, when the scheme for the new station at South Loop was developed.

The firm's founder, the late Mr Fred Ellis wanted the building to be conserved and made available for public use – hence it forming the centrepiece of the new station on the LCLR.

An unusual feature of the building is its clerestory roof, similar to those found on early railway carriages used by some railway companies but not the GNR which operated the line to Skegness until its amalgamation into the London & North Eastern Railway and successors.

The building is in remarkably good condition and is expected to open to the public in 2025.

The new station has been made possible by a grant of £24,250 to the LCLR made jointly by East Lindsey District Council, South Holland District Council and Boston Borough Council under the previous Government's Levelling Up programme. Match funding of £8,000 by Ellis Bros will provide £32,250 for the project.

Work on the site has been delayed and interrupted by the prolonged heavy rainfall which Lincolnshire has experienced since the autumn of 2023, affecting the water table and the ability to move equipment and materials to the site. However good progress is now being made. ***Photo: LCLR***

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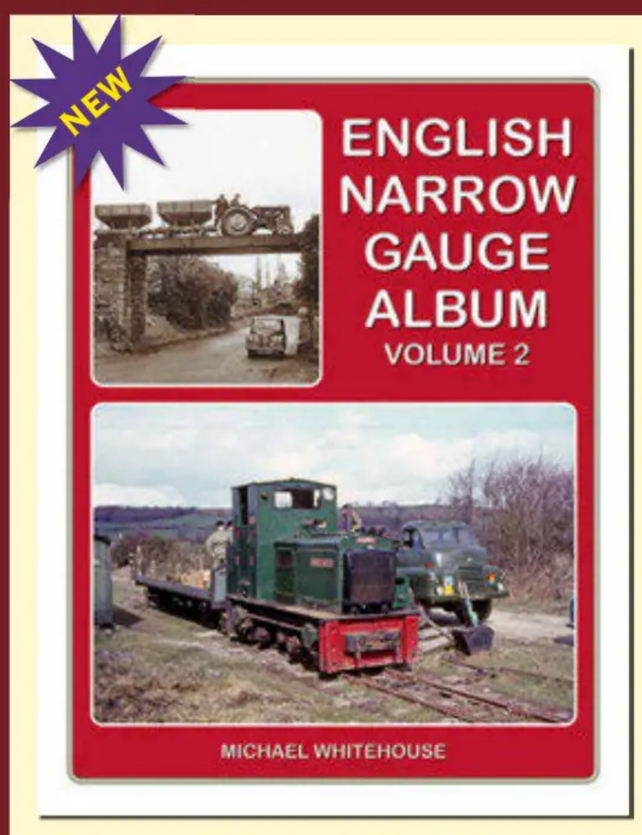

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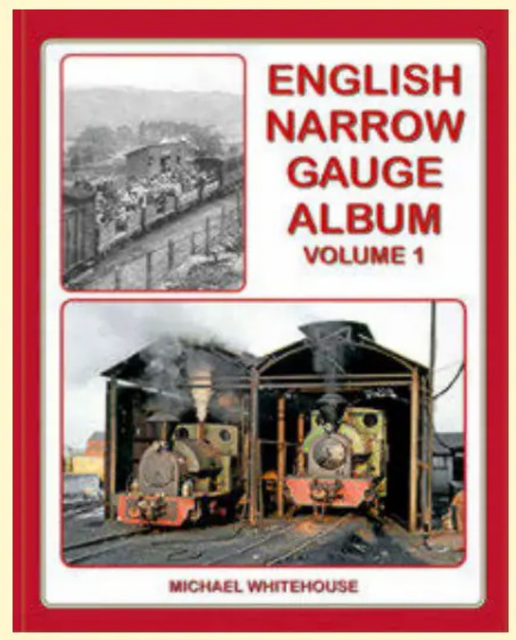

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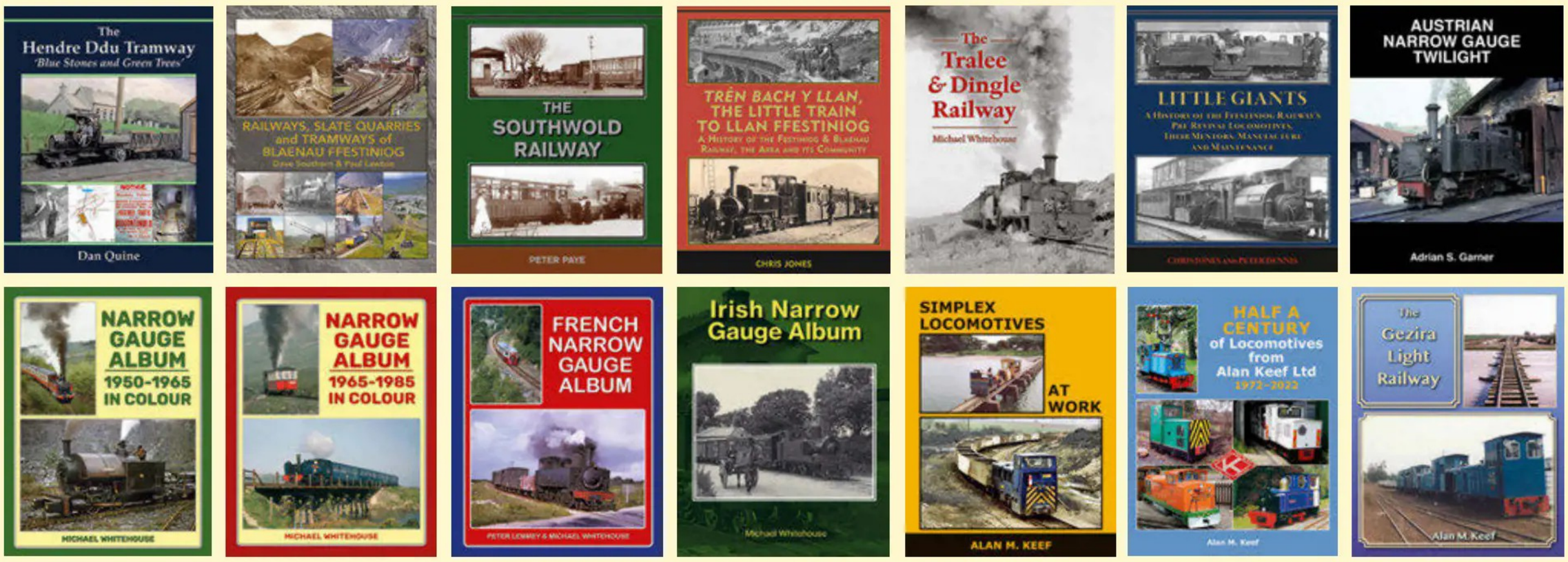
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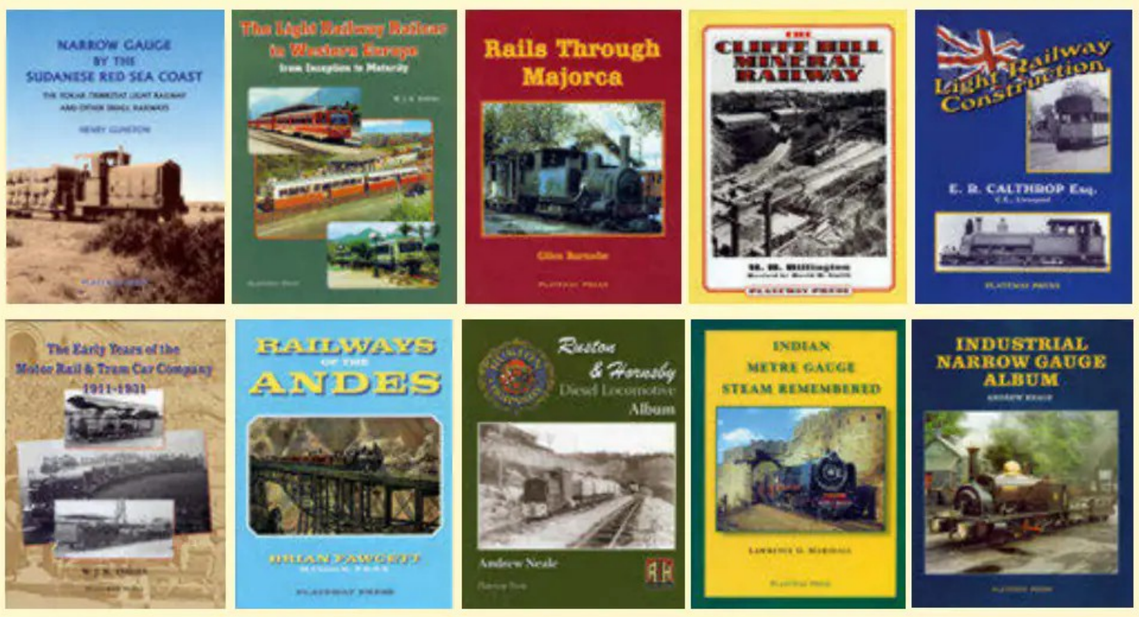
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■ **The cosmetic restoration of 3ft gauge Hudswell Clarke 0-4-0ST 'Handy Man' for the Statfold Narrow Gauge Trust by the team at 'Workshop X', at Killamarsh in Derbyshire is closing on its conclusion. In late August the restored saddle tank, cab and tanks were all tried on the boiler to ensure the last piece of cladding fitted correctly, and to the team's relief it did. The tank, cab sheet and side tanks were then all removed again so that the cladding could be painted in place.**

Elsewhere in Workshop X the carrier frames for new-build North Wales Narrow Gauge Railway single-Fairlie project 'Gowrie' have been painted, ahead of the fitting of the loco's bunker.

Photos: Workshop X

Santa Teresa on way back at Brecon

The Brecon Mountain Railway is making good progress with remedial work to its Baldwin 2-6-2 'Santa Theresa' after the engine was withdrawn several months ago with leaking boiler tubes.

During the first of a series of workshop walkarounds published on the South Wales 2ft gauge line's social media, recently appointed BMR general manager Stuart Williams said that the entire tube nest on the locomotive, which was built originally in 1897 as a 2-6-0, later converted to 2ft 6in gauge and then back again, had required replacement.

"It was only six years since they were last done so we are not over-impressed with that," Stuart admitted, while adding that the work was progressing very well and the line's workshop staff confident that the loco would be in traffic for September trains.

During the summer months all services on the BMR have been handled by the line's Baldwin 4-6-2 no 2 of (61269/1930), and Stuart added that the locomotive had performed very well with no problems.

Further workshop efforts during the summer have included refurbishment of some of the line's bogie wagon fleet – the BMR prefers to store its coal undercover so deliveries are loaded into the wagons and then stored in sheds up the line.

Meanwhile the line is progressing with its project to build a replica of a 2-4-4 Forney locomotive, based on original Baldwin drawings that have been provided by the Sandy River & Rangeley Lakes Railway in the USA.

The frames and cylinders of the loco have now been erected and the driving wheelsets are in place, while the boiler has also been built and is currently in store.

Braxted progress may see steam in 2026

The little Braxted railway, a 2ft gauge line opened in April 2022 near Witham in Essex, continues to develop (*reports* ***Stuart Chapman***).

This year has seen the introduction of dining services using the replica Scindia State Railway Carriage which was acquired at the auction of the late Adrian Shooter's Beeches Light Railway. The railway has also recently completed construction of a larger-size brake van which has been scratchbuilt on site.

Restoration of the former Spanish colliery Henschel 0-4-0T (16045/1918)acquired in 2022 from the collection of the late Peter Rampton, continues, with the frames now refurbished and the boiler away for repair. The railway hopes to put the locomotive into service in 2026.

Left: Inter City? On 16th August Alan Keef no 18 was in charge on the little Braxted Railway. ***Photo: Stuart Chapman***

■ Ffestiniog Railway members took advantage of a rather special photo opportunity recently when 1979-built Double Fairlie locomotive 'Earl of Merioneth' was given some much needed TLC.

The loco, out of service since 2018 and effectively replaced by new-build Fairlie 'James Spooner' has recently been moved from storage in the works at Glan-y-Pwll, Blaenau Ffestiniog, to the engine shed at Boston Lodge as part of the new tours around the FR's works, detailed in *NGW*187.

Nicknamed by FR members as 'The Square' due to its angular side tanks, The Earl was initially displayed in grubby, distressed 'as withdrawn' condition but in mid August it was moved to the erecting shop, enabling a group of volunteers to remove dust and grime that had built up over the past six years, cleaning the paintwork and polishing brass, as well as attending to areas of rust.

Before The Earl was returned to the Old Engine Shed, the opportunity was taken to line up all four FR-based Double Fairlies - James Spooner, 'David Lloyd George', Earl of Merioneth and 'Merddin Emrys' for what the line's marketing manager Osian Hughes described as a very special photograph. "Unfortunately 'Livingston Thompson', currently on display at the National Railway Museum, couldn't join the party!" Osian commented.

Photo: David Jones/FF&WHR

■ Graham Morris's very well-travelled Kerr Stuart Wren 0-4-0ST 'Peter Pan' has been on the move again, firstly as a guest at the Old Kiln Light Railway's Steam Gala (right) on 7th-8th September where it worked alongside the Surrey line's resident pairing, Orenstein & Koppel 0-6-0WT 'Elouise' (9998/1922) and 0-4-0T 'Emmet', built by Jim Haylock in 2005.

Peter Pan then headed further south to Hayling Island in Hampshire for the East Hayling Light Railway's Gala over the following weekend (below), and was due to complete a busy month on Saturday 28th September with an appearance at the open day of rail engineers Alan Keef Ltd.

* *NGW* apologises for publishing an incorrect date for the Old Kiln Gala last month, confusing the event with one of the line's working weekends.

Photos: Joey Evans and Sean Cullen

Send WORLD NEWS stories to Andrew Charman by email, editor@narrowgaugeworld.co.uk, or by post to 12 Maes Gwyn, Llanfair Caereinion, Powys, SY21 0BD. Telephone: 01938 810592

Visiting loco 'Hoya' helped with the 125th anniversary celebrations on the Harz. *Photo via HSB*

Harz celebrates line's 125 years

The Harzer Schmalspurbahnen marked the 125th anniversary of the opening of the Brocken and Harzquerbahn on 24th-25th August with a special train to the summit (*reports* ***Dominic Emery***).

The regular Harz train on the route was piloted for the occasion by visiting 0-6-0T 'Hoya' from the Deutschen Eisenbahn-Verein, which is also celebrating its 125th anniversary in 2024.

Also visiting from the DER was Wismar railcar no T 41 'Der Maus' and this gave rides to visitors between Wernigerode Hbf and Wernigerode Hasserode through the anniversary weekend.

The event was centred on the new steam locomotive workshops in Wernigerode which were open for guided tours and with various other special attractions for visitors.

Forest blaze turns Harz into fire-fighter

GERMANY

Trains on the Harzer Schmalspurbahnen's signature route up to the summit of the Brocken mountain had to be suspended from the 8th September (*reports* ***Dominic Emery***) due to a large forest fire between Schieke and Brocken.

The fire began burning on Friday 6th September on the Königsberg, a side peak of the Brocken which is Germany's tallest mountain. According to local media within a day several smaller fires had merged to form a large front some 1,000 metres across. Around 500 people were evacuated from the mountain as 150 firefighters battled the blaze and due to the terrain being difficult to reach, three aircraft and helicopters were called in.

During the days that the fire was burning trains on the metre-gauge Harz line only ran to Drei Annen Hohe and the line also provided significant aid to the fire fighting efforts.

Water was supplied to the emergency personnel using converted standard-gauge four-wheeled tankers carried on metre gauge transporter wagons. News videos showed both steam and diesel motive power being used to take the wagons to the fire front.

A thunderstorm helped with efforts to extinguish the fire and it was finally declared out on 11th September, train services resuming on the following day.

An investigation has started into the cause of the blaze. The region also suffered a major fire in September 2022.

Left: One of the Harz standard gauge water carriers on transporter wagons employed in the battle against the fire – they are normally kept at the Brocken summit. ***Photo: Dominic Emery***

Loco derailed in collision on level crossing

Five passengers were slightly injured when a train on the 750mm gauge Weißeritztalbahn in Saxony, **GERMANY** his a lorry that had failed to stop at an ungated level crossing on 19th August (*reports* ***Dominic Emery***).

The incident, just outside Dippoldswalde, resulted in 2-10-2T locomotive no 99 1762-6 coming almost entirely off the track but thankfully remaining upright. A street lamp, signal and transformer cabin were also flattened in this incident.

Following remedial work at the scene the line reopened on the same day and has since been running to a reduced timetable. No. 99 1762-7 was taken to the SDG locomotive workshops in Oberwiesental for the damage to be checked and repaired over the next few months.

Harz to add miles?

On 6th September the Harzer Schmalspurbahnen GmbH (HSB) officially commissioned the preparation of a feasibility study to connect the town of Braunlage to its metre-gauge network.

The plan follows a previous feasibility study that was carried out in 2010 and a unanimous vote in favour of the proposal by the Lower Saxony town's councillors in July 2022.

A suitable site has since been established for a centrally located HSB station in Braunlage which will be adjacent to a cable car terminus.

Rack full of problems in Austria

There were red faces all round on the Achenseebahn on 28th August, when loco no 3 'Theodor', built at Floridsdorf in 1889 and one of the oldest regularly working rack locomotives in the world, ran short of water at Fischl (*reports* ***Michael Reilly***).

The incident occurred roughly half way on the metre-gauge line's climb from Jenbach to the mid-point at Eben, with the 14.10 train from Jenbach. The local fire brigade was called to the rescue, sending two fire tenders to help replenish the tanks.

Possibly concerned for the railway's reputation, an official tried strenuously, but not entirely successfully, to prevent any filming or photography of the event. Normal service was resumed after a delay of almost an hour.

Two days later it was the turn of staff on the Schafbergbahn, another metre-gauge rack line, to feel the pressure. A bright sunny day brought out the crowds and the railway was operating a peak timetable, with all four diesel locomotives in use, together with two of the line's four 1990s-era steam locomotives from SLM.

Unfortunately, the first of these, 1992-built no 11, failed at the summit station in the middle of the day with a suspected overheated big-end. Its 1996-built sister no 14 was hastily despatched to the rescue, leading to the unusual sight of a light engine on the rack.

Later in the afternoon no 11 descended cautiously under its own steam before entering the works in St Wolfgang.

Above left: The fire brigade brings essential replenishment to Acheseebahn no 3 'Theodor' on 28th August.

Above: Two days later and Schafbergbahn no 14 has just passed Schafberg Alm station on its way to rescue sister no 11.

Photos: Michael Reilly

Visiting trams mark 75-year milestone

The Haags Openbaar Vervoer Museum (Hague Public Transport Museum) has seen several visiting trams from Belgium in 2024 to mark 75 years of PCC (President Conference Committee) tram designs being used in the **NETHERLANDS** (*reports* ***Sjors van Dongen***).

The PCC, considered an icon of tram design, is an American creation, first built in the 1930s and licensed for use across the globe after the Second world War.

Two of the Hague visitors were narrow gauge – between 26th July and 12th August NMVB 10409, from the Musée du Tram Vicinal (light railway museum) in Thuin (Wallonia) was displayed on a specially created section of metre gauge track, allowing the tram to be pushed out of the museum for display by hand.

A special line-up on 4th August included visiting standard gauge Brussels PCC 7065 and The Hague resident 1022.

On 22nd August De Lijn 7072 arrived in the museum, thanks to sponsorship by the NVBS, the Dutch Rail and Tramway Society. This tram originates from the metre-gauge Antwerp tramway where these PCCs have been a familiar sight since the 1960s – a number, including 7072, are still in daily use, although their numbers are dwindling rapidly.

■ **Two trams sit outside the historic shed of the Gmunden Tramway on 16th August, while a current generation unit passes by on the way to the AUSTRIAN town's main station. The tramway was celebrating its 130th year of operation with an intensive service using operational historic rolling stock, GM 100 (originally from the Pöstlingbergbahn) and GM 5.** ***Photo: Sjors van Dongen***

Send WORLD NEWS stories to Andrew Charman by email, editor@narrowgaugeworld.co.uk, or by post to 12 Maes Gwyn, Llanfair Caereinion, Powys, SY21 0BD. Telephone: 01938 810592

At the Bröltalbahn museum on 11th August, Ns3 diesel V6 was performing demonstration shunts over the new pointwork while former Heeresfeldbahn steam engine 152 sat inside the shed and original RSE no. 52 outside. ***Photo: Sjors van Dongen***

New track fuels future ambitions

The Bröltalbahn RSE Museum in Asbach, **GERMANY** has recently expanded its operational flexibility by installing two new points and a short extension of its 785mm gauge running line (*reports* ***Sjors van Dongen***).

The modification now allows more expansive shunting operations to take place outside the original Rhein Sieg Railway shed in Asbach. Founded in 2000, the museum celebrates the original Bröltalbahn that was the first public narrow gauge railway in Germany and once stretched to 87km – it closed in 1967.

In the near future the museum has ambitions to expand the running line to the society's boundary fence and run short demonstration trains for visitors.

Line cut but future looks longer

Trains on the Preßnitztalbahn in Saxony, **GERMANY**, have been running over a reduced route since the end of May (*reports* ***Christian Jummrich***) while a bridge that carries the 750mm gauge line over the Schwarzwasser river at the station entrance in Schlössel is renewed.

Steam services still operate as usual every Saturday and Sunday in summer, but currently only between Steinbach and Schmalzgrube, with individual trains also running further to the Loreleyfelsen stop. The onward journey to Jöhstadt is completed by a historic rail replacement bus service.

The small shed in Schmalzgrube has been prepared for the interim storage of locomotives with trains currently being hauled by IV K series loco 99 1594. The line is expected to be back in full operation again in October.

Positive news from the line is the intention to extend trains from Steinbach 1.5km down the valley to Oberschmiedeberg by 2030. The station at Oberschmiedeberg station has already been rebuilt and was opened in January, during which the mayor of the Preßnitz valley and representatives of the railway signed a declaration to keep the remaining 13km of line from Oberschmiedeberg to Wolkenstein clear of any construction in the hope of reinstating the line sometime in the future.

Meanwhile an apartment block built on the site of Jöhstadt station after the railway closed in 1984 will be demolished in 2025. The existence of the block has made reconstruction of the station for museum operations operationally challenging.

Loco 99 1594 running round on the truncated line on 11th August. ***Photo: Christian Jummrich***

■ ***NGW*** **reader** ***Nigel Peacock*** **travelled on the Mariazellbahn from St. Pölten in AUSTRIA on 18th August and found that due to engineering work the 760mm gauge electric line's trains were terminating 500 metres short of the main station at Mariazell. At the temporary station, near the Mariazell Museumtramway's Freizeitzentrum (leisure centre) station a connecting service transferred passengers to the Promenadenweg, close to the town centre and was operated by steam tram 0-6-0T DTKC (BBÖ) no 31 'Stammersdorf' (296.01/1904).**

Slides stop Darj trains

Torrential rain around Darjeeling, **INDIA** on 5th July suspended services on the upper section of the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway.

Around five inches of rain fell in a matter of hours, triggering extensive mud slides and causing massive disruption, rail authorities anticipating services would be suspended until late in the month due to debris on the track and safety concerns.

A severe road subsidence at Paga Jhora added to the problems though fortunately the rail tracks were not damaged. Trains continued to run as far as Kurseong.

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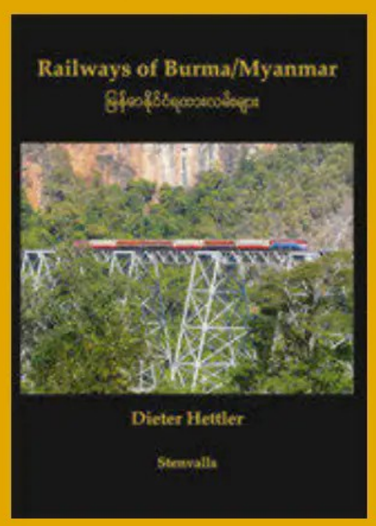

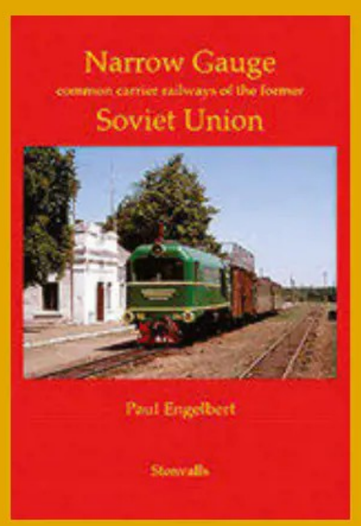

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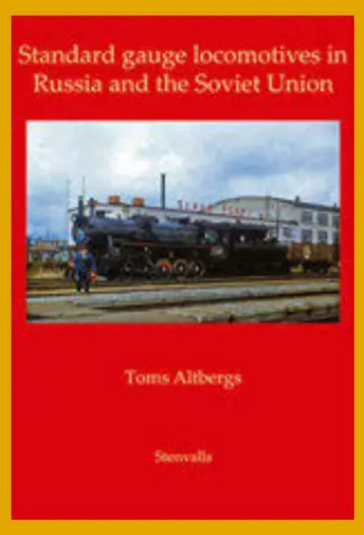

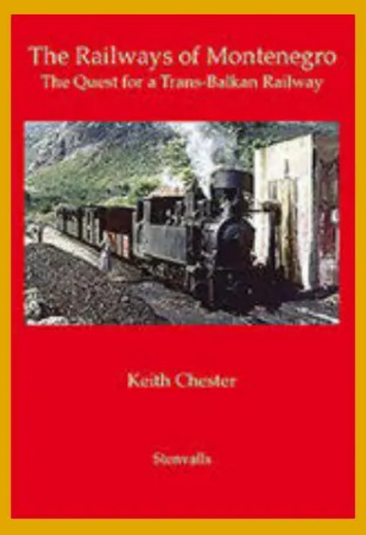

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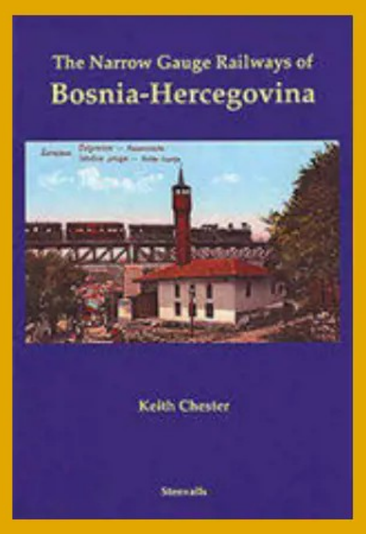

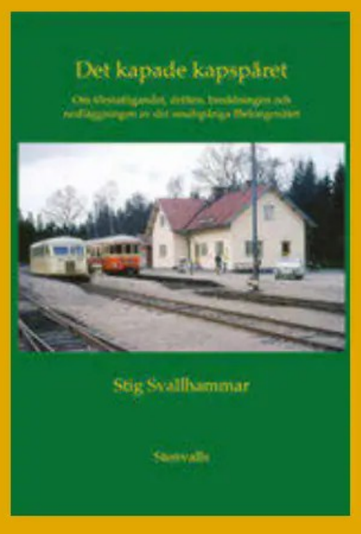

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WAITE'S WORLD

Narrow Gauge in China – 2004

James Waite **begins a three-part series by focusing on a line unknown to Western visitors until 1999.**

At the turn of the 21st century many enthusiasts headed to northern China, mainly for the spectacular and recently-constructed JiTong main line, but there were also several 762mm gauge forestry railways. Reports abounded of substandard accommodation, poor food, freezing temperatures and a certain sameness about what passed for scenery, and somehow the place didn't appeal!

Little reported were railways in the south, until in 2003 the French magazine *Voie Etroite* published a comprehensive account, accompanied by superb photos of little trains working through attractive sub-tropical countryside, often among bamboos and banana plants, in a land boasting comfortable hotels and a veritable feast of culinary delights. I was hooked!

Coal has been mined for hundreds of years in the hills of southern Sichuan. The seam occurrence conditions are complex, and most mines are small. One was established at Huancungjing, near Bagou in Qianwei County in 1938 by the Jiayang Mining Group, initially a Sino-British joint venture. Much of the equipment was relocated from Zhongfu colliery at Jiaozuo, in Henan province which the Japanese army had recently invaded. The group operated two other mines nearby, at Jiaoba near Bagou and at Yuejin.

The Huancungjing coal was of high quality. At first it was transported away on a 600mm gauge man-powered tramway and then transhipped at Mamiao to small boats on the Mabian River, a tributary of the wide Min Jiang River which joins the Jinsha Jiang at Yibin to become the Yangtze. From there it travelled another 260km downstream to a steelworks at Chongqing, at the time China's temporary capital.

Above: Chinese narrow gauge – 0-8-0 no 9 exits Eagle Beak tunnel, between Mifengyan and Caiziba.

Below: The two 0-8-0s in use during the October 2004 visit, nos 9 and 14, stand outside Shixi shed during the evening.

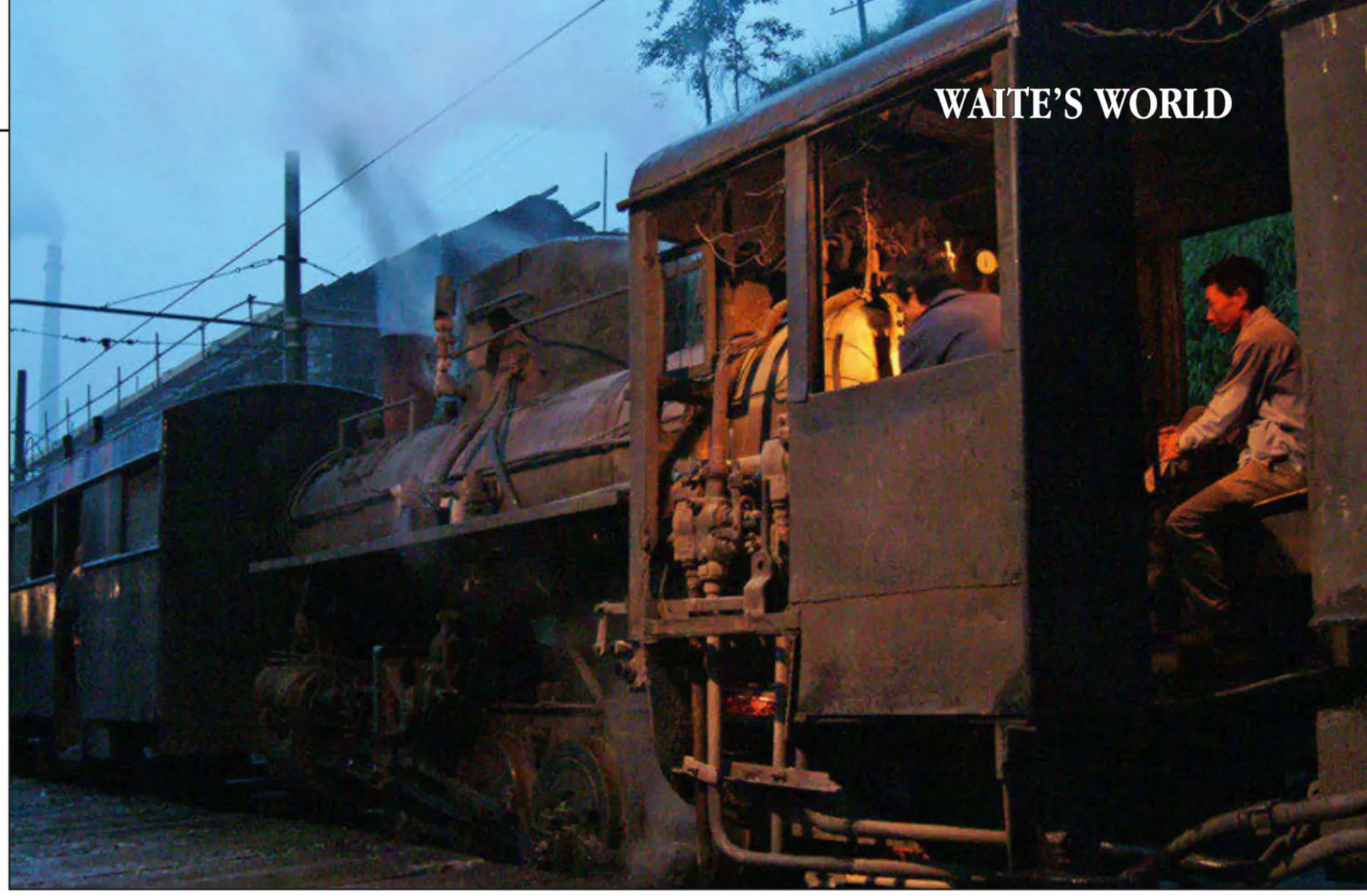
Photos by James Waite, 5th and 6th October 2004

A new line

In August 1958, during China's Great Leap Forward, construction began of a new 19.5km-long railway to connect the mine to Shixi, a port town on the Min Jiang. Named the BaShi Railway after the towns at each end, it used the same 600mm gauge.

About 10,000 workers were involved in construction and it opened on 12th July 1959. Much of the workmanship was shoddy and problems with subsidence began almost at once. In the following year the line was rebuilt, in the process being converted to the 762mm gauge used for most narrow gauge railways throughout the country.

The 600mm line was worked by small tank locos. Larger ones were used after the gauge conversion, perhaps some of the 70 RJ class 18-tonne 0-8-0Ts built between 1959 and 1965 at Chengdu, Sichuan's provincial capital, or similar Yun1118 locos supplied from Dalian and Zhengzhou between 1952 and 1962 or SY ones from Guangzhou. They were the first Chinese-built narrow gauge locos and were similar to Orenstein & Koppel machines built



for the Japanese in 1937 when they occupied Manchuria.

At Shixi these locos were later replaced by the ubiquitous Chinese-built 28-tonne tender 0-8-0s. When I visited in October 2004 these were numbered from 7 upwards, so there may perhaps have been as many as six of the earlier machines.

New locomotives

The new machines were copied from the Soviet PT-4s, and more specifically the Kp-4 version built in Poland for both the USSR and China. About 575 were produced from the late 1950s at the Shijiazhuang factory, about 300km southwest of Beijing, and 220 at Harbin in Manchuria. Around 30 more were built elsewhere while the last few came from Harbin before production ended in 1988.

These engines are all often called C2s, but strictly this title only applies to the Harbin machines, and perhaps it is better to refer to them generically as 28-tonne locos. The Shijiazhuang ones were known at first as KM-4s (possibly a misread designation on the Soviet-supplied drawings as KП-4, the Cyrillic equivalent of Kp-4), and later as ZM16-4s.

The 0-8-0s at Shixi were mostly Shijiazhuang products, though there are well-equipped workshops at Shixi. In 1974 the Shixi staff are believed to have built no 12, their very own 28-tonne machine, at least in that they constructed new frames and a new boiler, though other parts may have been recycled from older locos. At first they ran with six-wheel tenders similar to the Soviet ones, though the tanks were raised above the frames in what was probably a locally-inspired modification.

In 1991, two 26-tonne SJ380A diesels arrived from the Mudanjiang Forestry Machinery Factory in the far east of Manchuria, but they cost more to run, and were put into storage from 1996.

Two more 0-8-0s came from the Pengzhou-Baishuihe railway near Chengdu, probably in 2006 or 2007. They had much larger tenders mounted on bogies, with distinctive sloping backs to ease visibility when running backwards. Overhauls took several years, but the tenders immediately found favour, being attached at once to existing locos, and more were built to re-equip the entire fleet. The Pengzhou machines became nos 8 and 18. There are now also nos 16, 17 and 19, all believed to have been built recently at Shixi.

The district had few roads and provision for passengers was essential. At first they were conveyed in coal wagons and accidents were common. Primitive carriages were soon built and at first were attached to the coal trains, but from 1975 separate passenger services were offered.

Initially the coal was carried in wagons made from bamboo, a plentiful commodity locally, though presumably with steel or wooden underframes. They were replaced by wooden tubs, and finally by small four-wheeled steel hopper wagons.

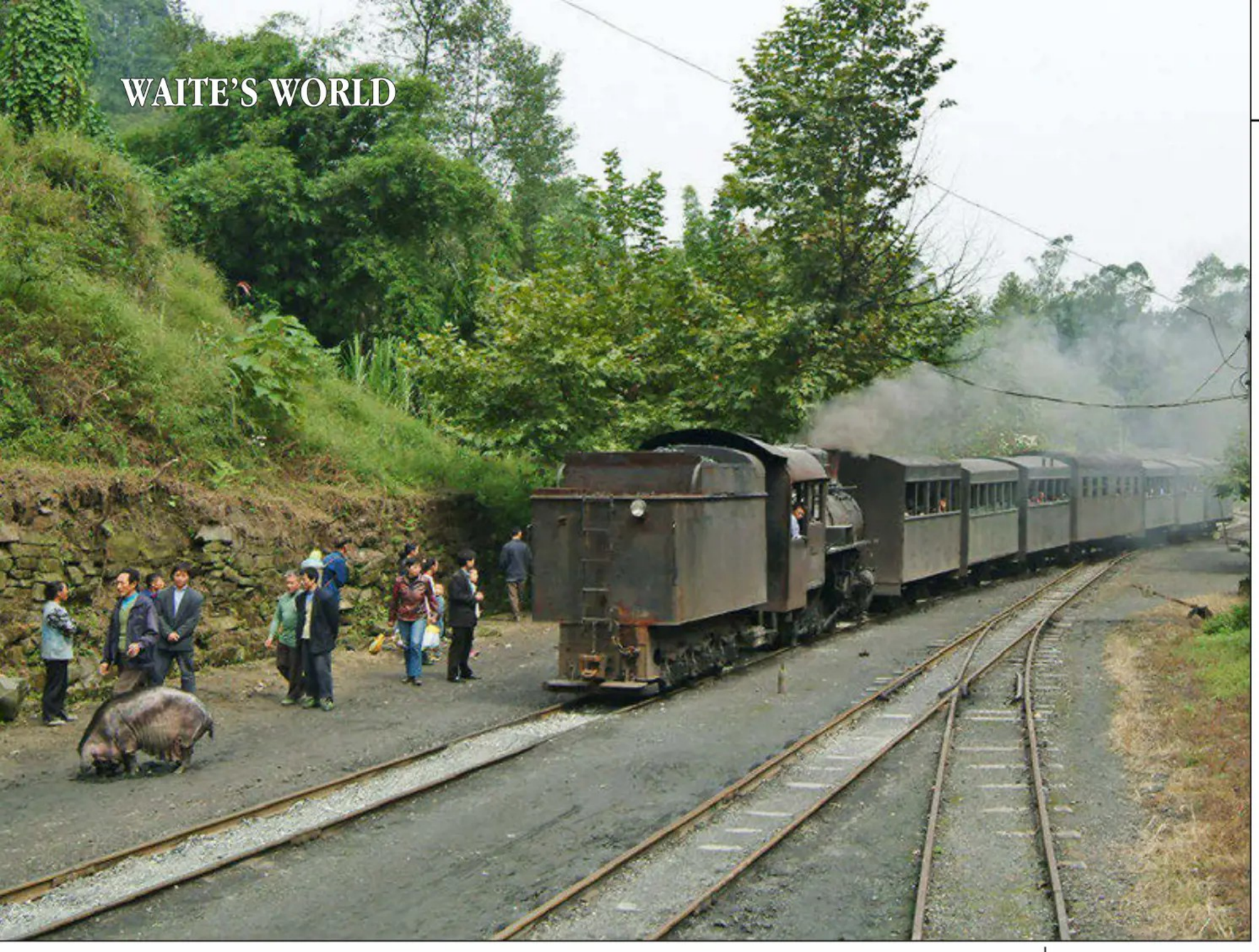
The Jiayang company opened a large coal-fired power station at Shixi in 1999, at the opposite end of the town from the station. It was supplied from the Yuejin mine, just 4km out from Shixi and reportedly the largest anywhere in Sichuan. In the following year 550v DC overhead electrification was installed between Yuejin and Shixi, and three ZL-14-7 class four-wheeled locos were acquired from the Changzhou factory near Shanghai.

The coal had to be transported through the streets of the town since »

Above: No 14 at Shixi before dawn with the early morning train to Huancungjing. The front portion of the cabside has been removed, no doubt to provide welcome fresh air.

Below: Passers-by walking along the track watch no 14 near Jiaoba on the return to Shixi.

Below left: No 9 – in service on the second day of the visit – is outside the depot at Shixi.



the line was never extended to the power station, which was such a notoriously smoky and unwholesome place that the BBC once ran a feature about its appalling emissions. The electric locos' activities were confined to the Yuejin coal traffic and the 0-8-0s continued to work through to Shixi. The power station closed in December 2016 and the overhead wiring was abandoned – while the Yuejin mine is still open, it now solely uses road transport.

Through the hills

The line starts above the river bank at Shixi and the workshops and running shed complex, a long and dark structure, is close to the station. The route twists and turns through the hills, and midway to Yuejin passes through the first of six tunnels.

Beyond Yuejin there's a reversing station with a bar and café at Mifengyan, a small village. On many little railways one might expect an opportunity to get out for a leisurely stroll while the loco runs round, and maybe to buy refreshments, but definitely not so here! In 2004 the loco usually uncoupled even before the train had come to a halt. It soon attached itself to the other end and was whistling for stragglers within two minutes or so of arrival. Much the same happened at Huancungjing, and the stops at the intermediate stations could be even briefer.

Beyond Mifengyan the line passes through tunnel no 5, at a picturesque spot under a karst hillside known to enthusiasts as the Eagle Beak. Further on was a horseshoe curve at Caiziba. Just beyond the line's summit Xianrenjiao station in 2004 boasted another bar and a café run by a very friendly family – a good spot to break the journey and enjoy that home-cooked meal and beer for which there wasn't time at Mifengyan!

"It soon attached itself to the other end and was whistling for stragglers within two minutes of arrival..."

Above: Two pigs joined the train at Mifengyan – the second is preparing to board.

Below: Riding with the pigs en route to Yuejin where they disembarked.

The railway continues through the rich, undulating countryside, with two more tunnels between Xianrenjiao and Jiaoba and another two before Bagou. There's a final section a little more than a kilometre long through a narrow valley leading to Huancungjing and the old colliery, with more karst rock formations. Curiously there is no river bridge larger than a culvert anywhere along the route.

The first western visitors arrived soon after the railway was discovered in 1999 by Li Nan, a tour guide from Chongqing. It was not the last Chinese line to come to the attention of enthusiasts, but for character it's definitely in a class of its own.

In 2004 it was still very much at the heart of the rural community – in many places a footpath ran along or close to the track, and there was an almost continuous throng of walkers, not confined to humans! Motor bikes were also a common sight, a reminder of the lack of roads beyond Yuejin.

The Jiaoba mine closed back in 1988. The one at Huancungjing closed in 2003, though it would later reopen for a few years and the man-powered bamboo-bodied wagons which served it were still to be seen. Some of the colliery tracks were only 300mm gauge, while others were a more respectable 600mm! Despite the lack of coal traffic the four daily return passenger trains kept the line beyond Yuejin busy.

Passengers and pigs

Most carriages were primitive four-wheeled vehicles, with just a single access as all the platforms are on the same side of the track. There was also one bogie carriage, but any notion that this might provide superior comfort was quickly dispelled upon entry – it was the vehicle of choice for people carrying vegetables for sale along the route or just with heavy luggage. On one of my trips this included a stylish twin-tub washing machine brought along to Xianrenjiao station by two young ladies, which everyone helped load onboard.

At one end of the carriage there was a pen for pigs. Two of them joined me at Mifengyan for a ride to Yuejin, fortunately not on the same journey as the washing machine! The pigs were most reluctant passengers. Maybe they knew their single tickets did not bode well for their longevity... More to the point was the distressing brutality when they were manhandled onto the train, which included being lifted by their ears and tails.

Along with the local travellers and

pigs were growing numbers of tourists. One young lady, whose startlingly dyed hair and fashionable clothes were in marked contrast to more local attire, was anxious to assure me (in English) that we were travelling on the most famous railway in the world! Southern Sichuan had become a popular tourist region, not only for its superb scenery and its furry black-and-white residents, but also for historic architecture. The Great Buddha at Leshan, one of China's most noted pilgrimage sites, is only 15km upstream from Shixi, and the giant panda base at Bifengxiang, the original home of the two that became greatly loved at Edinburgh Zoo, lies further up one of the Min Jiang's tributaries.

This new source of traffic has provided the railway with its salvation now that the collieries have closed and local residents have taken to newly-built roads. Buses have arrived at Bagou! In 2004 the management resolved to develop its tourist appeal and soon afterwards the local authority gave it protected status. Since August 2021 only tourist trains have run. Gone are the old carriages, replaced by upgraded ones with hitherto unknown luxuries such as glass in their windows, and pigs are no longer welcome passengers! There is even a steam-outline diesel, but it's believed that most trains are still worked by the 0-8-0s.

Huancungjing colliery has become a museum, interesting not just for the mining remains but also its murals and slogans from the Cultural Revolution, no longer a common sight in China. There's a guest house next to the junction at Mifengyan, and a railway museum opposite the platform. The exhibits include one of the 1991 diesels, no 9 which was one of the two 0-8-0s in use during my visit, and a standard gauge SY 2-8-2 which was broken down to its principal components, transported by rail and reassembled on site.

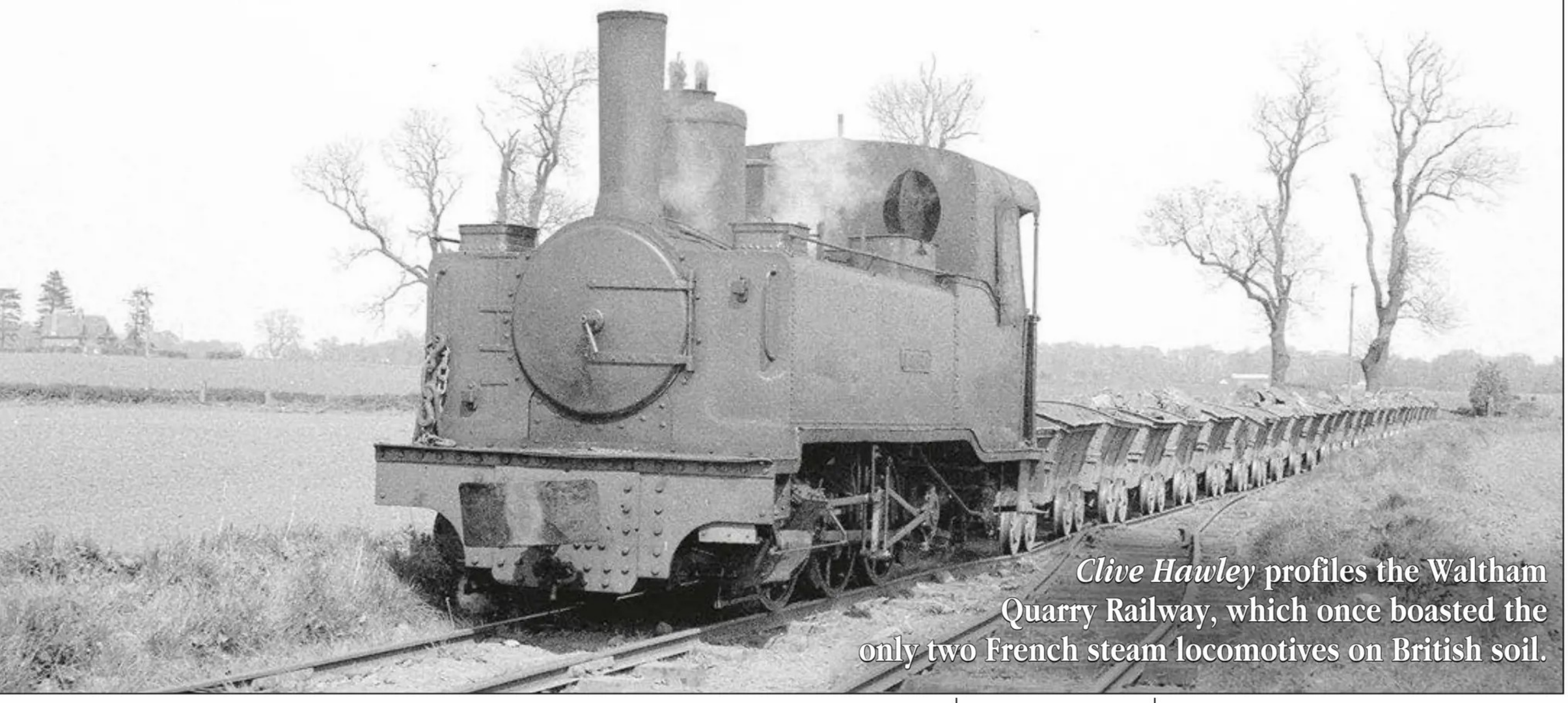
The line has inevitably lost some of its old character, but in this respect it's no different from many heritage railways all around the world. Hopefully it has survived China's long Covid lockdowns, and is now delighting visitors once again. **NGW**

Above: No 9 pauses at Bagou.

Below: Running round at the second reversing station at Huancungjing.

Below left: Electric locomotives nos 1 and 3 stand inside Shixi shed.

Metre Gauge in the Midlands



Clive Hawley profiles the Waltham Quarry Railway, which once boasted the only two French steam locomotives on British soil.

In the shadow of Belvoir Castle and across some of the beautiful rolling countryside of north Leicestershire, a metre-gauge industrial line was built to take iron ore from several open-cast quarries to the mainline. Little evidence of it remains today, but on careful searching it is still possible to detect its course. Whilst there were no passengers on this railway, a journey along it must have been delightful.

The Waltham Iron and Holwell Iron companies each opened up short-lived quarries that yielded only low-grade ore. Hence they leased land from the Duke of Rutland to extract ironstone around Eaton and Eastwell. To the east of the village of Stathern, the Waltham Quarry line began at the end of the Great Northern Railway's Eaton branch, which was an offshoot of the Melton Mowbray main line to Bottesford Junction.

A large embankment, at least 15ft high, was built to tower above the branch so that the narrow gauge tubs (also known as trucks and skips) could be hand-tipped into main-line wagons below, using a rotary tipper on wooden staging. The width of the embankment also allowed for shunting the tubs and for locos to run round. Below, and to the north side of the ridge, there was a lower area housing the loco shed and office. Corrugated-iron curved sheets from these buildings still linger.

In the 1890s, the line was less than two miles in length. It carried ironstone from Green Lane and Long Hole quarries to the west of the GNR branch. In the early 1900s, it was extended to loop eastward through fields until it crossed the road from Belvoir to Knipton and turned immediately northeast to follow the lane. The trackbed remains, with its supporting embankments.

Above: Image of the ironstone – Corpet-Louvet 'Cambrai' dwarfs its train of tubs as it leaves the pits in April 1957. It had been transferred from Loddington the previous year.

Below: 'Rutland', one of the first two purpose-built locos at Waltham. The vertical cylinders may have been to avoid damage by rocks in the quarries. *Photo: G.E. Manchester/Eli Coy collection, courtesy Beau and Allan Linley*

Either side of the line, the old quarry workings are still clearly visible. The trackbed was extended just prior to the First World War to the Branston Lane and adjacent quarries, but this has been well ploughed back into the landscape. After a level crossing, 300 metres down this lane, there still remains the concrete supports of a 'sausage' water tank to replenish the locos.

Metre gauge locos

As summarised by Eric S Tonks in his groundbreaking 1959 book *Ironstone Railways and Tramways of the Midlands*, the Waltham quarries passed into the control of the Staveley Coal and Iron Company, which was already managing quarries at Loddington in Northamptonshire. Exactly why they chose metre gauge for both systems is a question with no definite answer, but Tonks suggests that Sharp, Stewart & Co had two locos of this gauge available as the result of a cancelled order from Spain. The Loddington line was therefore gauged to take them rather than the opposite way round as in normal practice.

The slightly later Waltham system followed suit. It was initially served by a pair of 0-4-0STs probably built in 1884 and 1886 by the Staveley company. They were of a unique design having vertical cylinders, outside frames and geared drives. The first was named 'George Bond' after a

'redoubtable man' in charge of Staveley's quarrying activities. It was followed by 'Rutland', taking its name from the Duke of Rutland, lessor of the ground.

Their ultimate fates are shrouded in uncertainty, but they may not have lasted long after the arrival of a third locomotive that came new from Manning Wardle (1757/1910). 'Dreadnought', another 0-4-0ST, was later fitted with a pair of solid-centred trailing wheels to give greater stability. It had a distinctive green livery with two linings, an outer black edged in red and an inner yellow. The wheels were probably green with red coupling rods.

Dreadnought remained the newest locomotive owned by the company, but three others were then acquired secondhand. The first was 'The Baronet', built by Oliver & Co (102/1889) for the Loddington line. A sturdy but totally basic 0-4-0ST with no cab, it was in complete contrast to the next arrival in 1934.

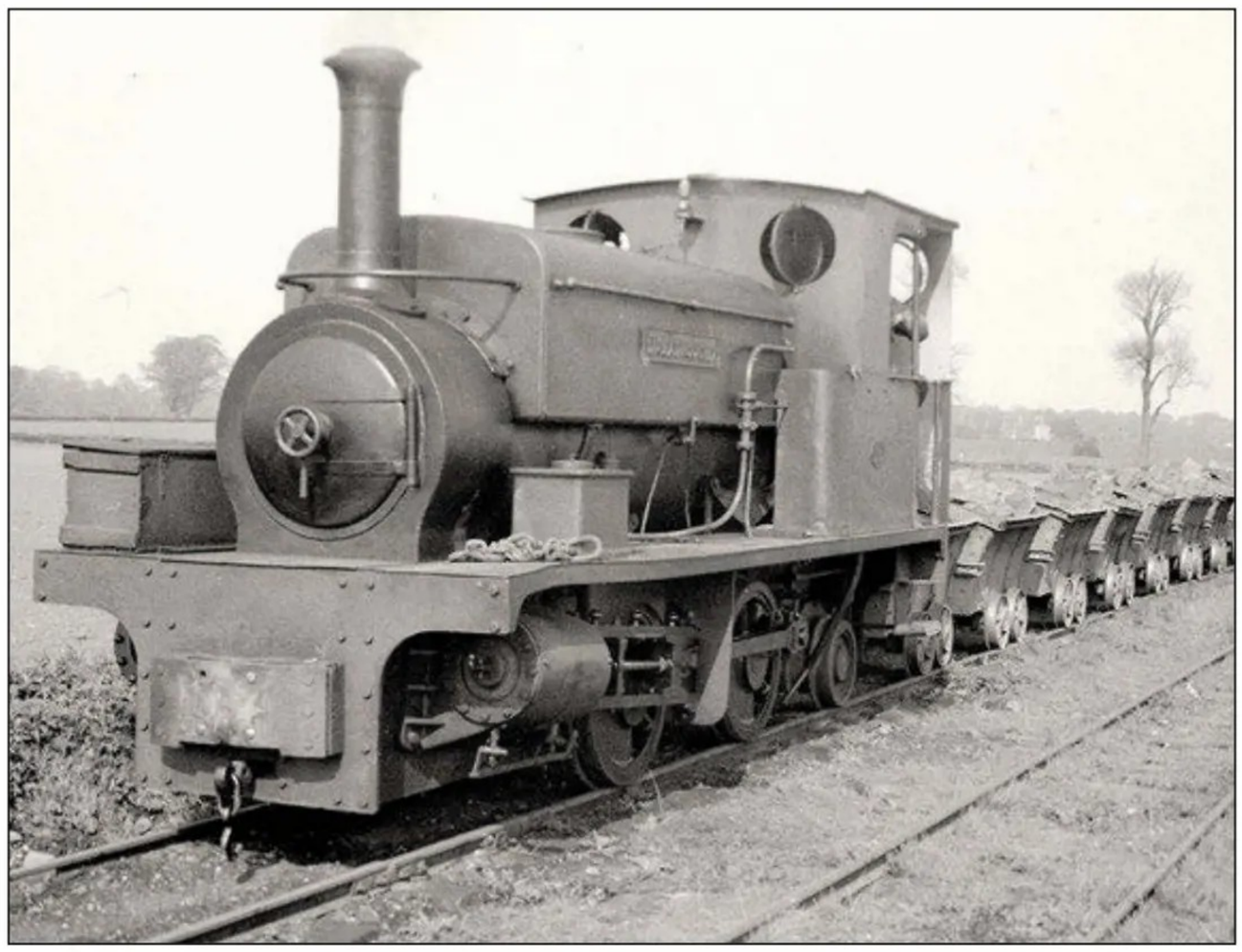
'Nantes' was a classic Corpet-Louvet 0-6-0T imported from France via the dealers T.W. Ward and originally built for the Chemin de Fer de la Loire Inferieure. It had one of the few makers' plates cast when the firm was owned by Veuve ('Widow') Corpet and L Louvet (936/1903). Despite having interior signage and instructions in French, the crew found it to be 'a very useful engine'. The Baronet was by contrast a totally inferior product and on withdrawal in 1949 was left to rust away on a loop line.

Dreadnought and Nantes then worked the line together until 1956 when the Manning Wardle required a heavy overhaul. 'Cambrai', a similar Corpet-Louvet (493/1888) to Nantes, was transferred from the Loddington quarries. It had been acquired via T.W. Ward in 1936 when the two engines gained the unique distinction of being the only steam locos built in France to work in Britain.

They were now both on the same railway, but it was to be a short-lived pairing. Initially, Cambrai was not a success so Dreadnought was prematurely restored to duties. Eventually, Cambrai's idiosyncrasies were mastered. Dreadnought returned to the workshop and it was now the turn of Nantes to languish in a siding.

Last days

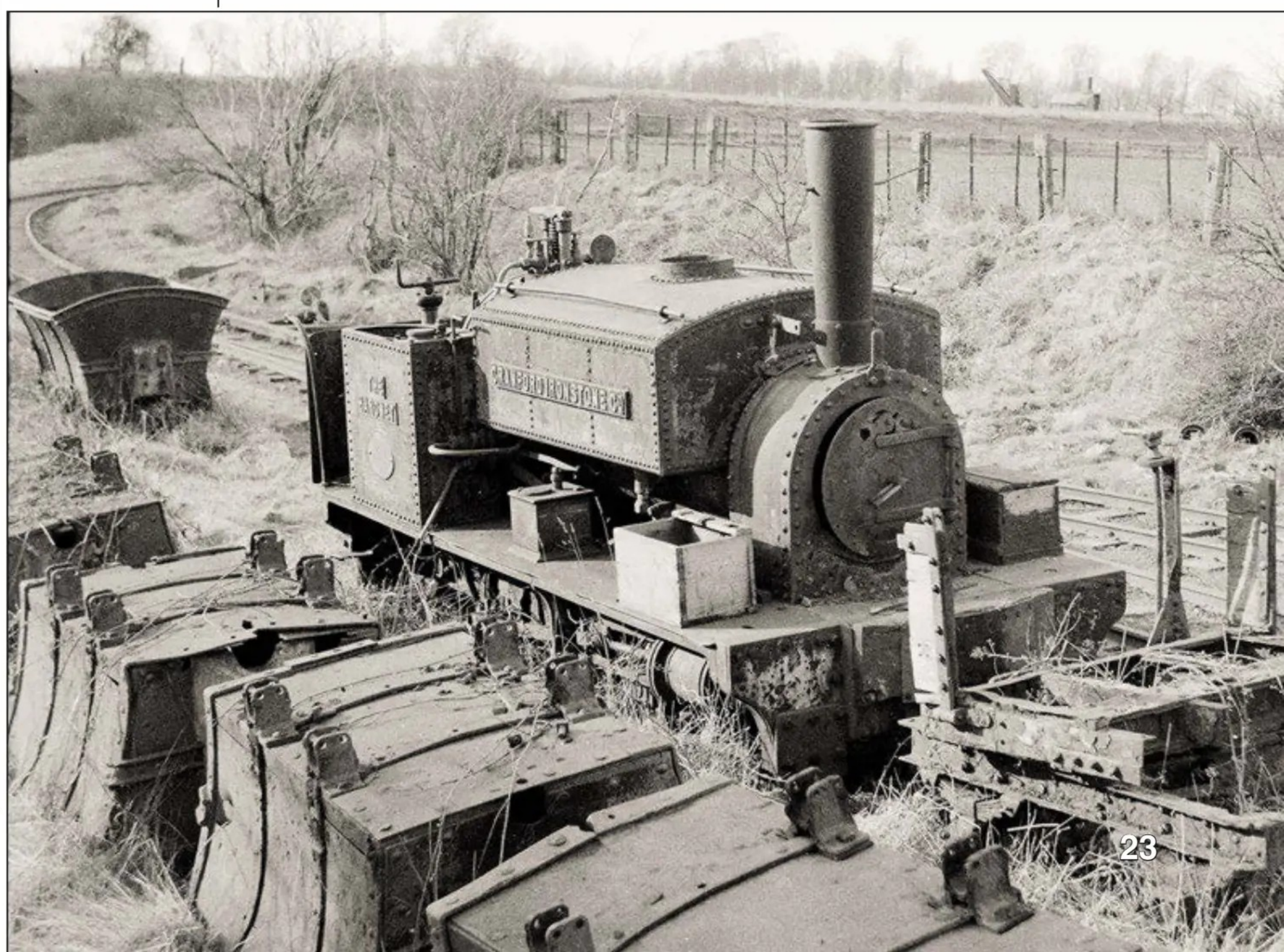
In the 1950s, quarrying continued to be extended towards Belvoir Castle, some three miles distant from the main-line tipping area, and so the line was lengthened, proceeding in the same general direction as the road to Knipton. The locos hauled trains of more than 21 tubs, each laden »

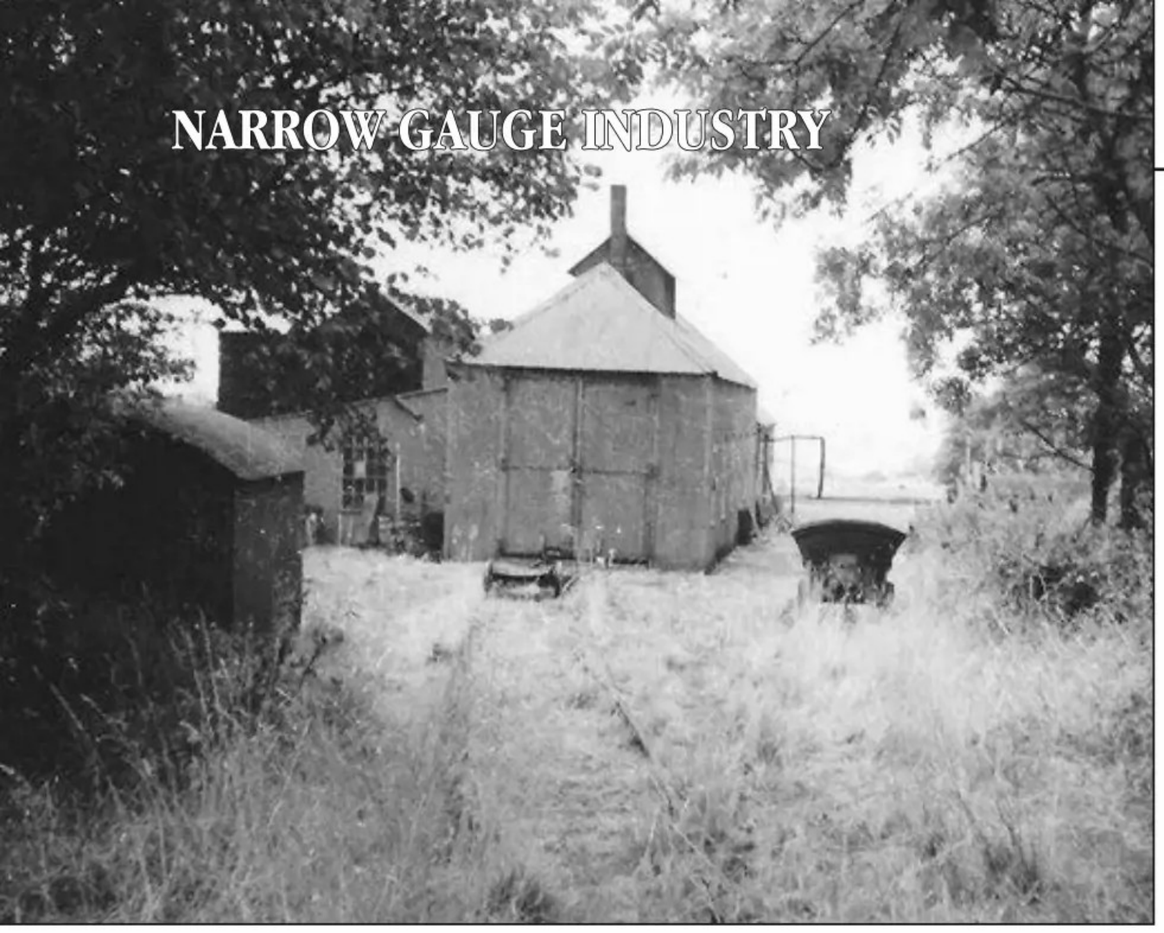


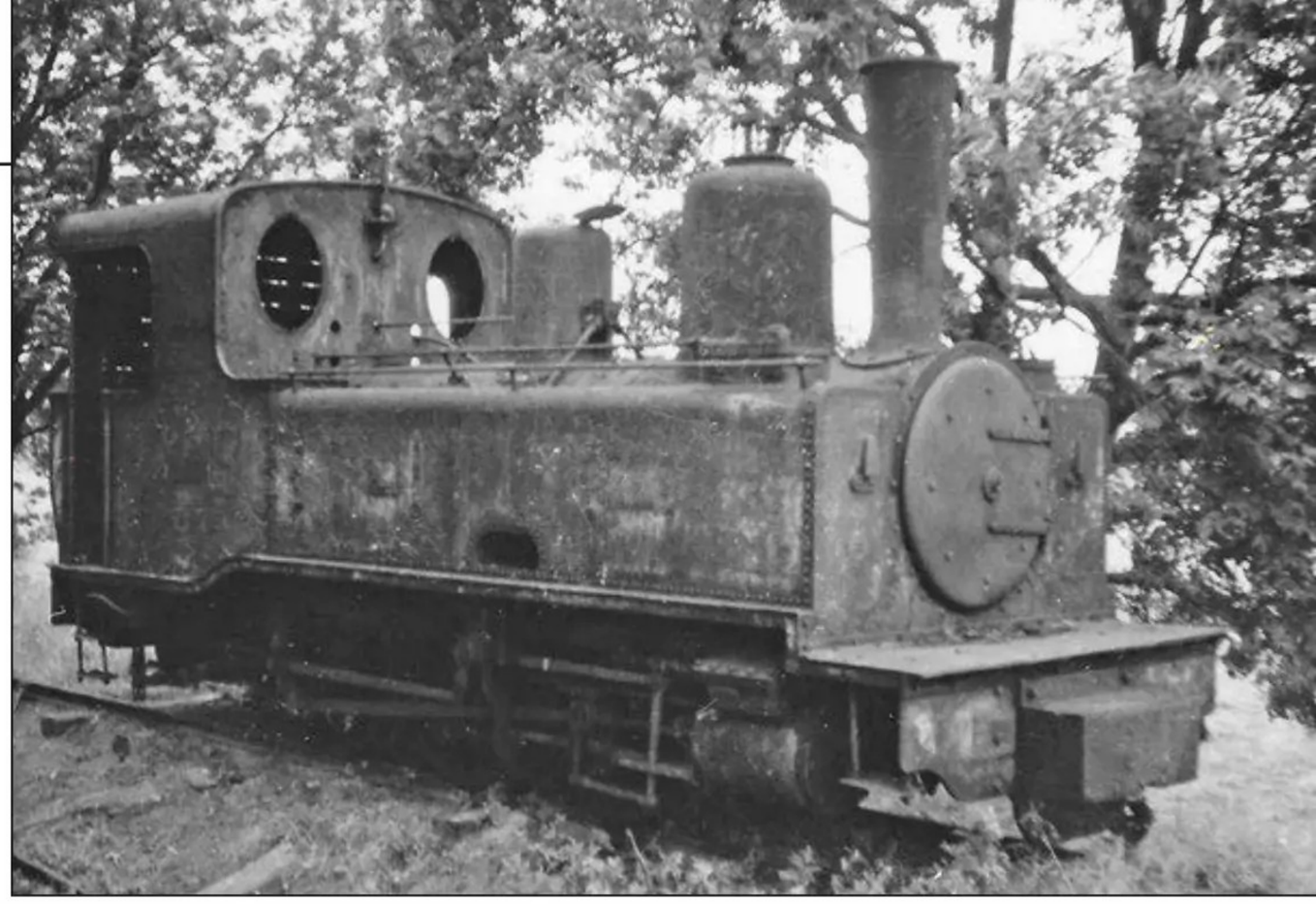
Above: 'Nantes', the first French-built loco to arrive at Waltham and well liked by its crew. Photo likely taken July 1949.

Right: Manning Wardle 0-4-2ST 'Dreadnought' on a passing loop, April 1957.

Below: The strictly functional 'The Baronet', rusting away in April 1958.







with 35 to 37 hundredweight of ore, totalling around 40 tons.

Today, the location of the line towards the High Lees, Grandby and Harts quarries has disappeared once again, under the well-tended agricultural fields until the point where it makes a sharp 90-degree turn towards Knipton. Here, the trackbed is still clearly discernible.

By 1958, even these quarries were worked out. The Waltham system outlived the Loddington line by only a few months and was claimed to be Britain's last metre gauge railway when it closed. Dreadnought and Cambrai were greased up and locked inside the engine shed. Nantes was still camped on the embankment and The Baronet left to rust further down the line.

In August 1959, track lifting began and by October 1960, now isolated and rusted up, the latter two locomotives were ignominiously broken up by the scrap merchant's torch. Dreadnought suffered the same fate in December 1960.

Lucky survivor

Nantes had been promised to the Narrow Gauge Museum at the Talyllyn Railway, but it was too late to save it. So, the quarrying company instead offered Cambrai as it was only suffering slight weathering damage. Today, Cambrai is, in a red livery and black outline, on loan to the Irchester Narrow Gauge Museum, near Wellingborough – a former centre of ironstone quarrying. This loco was modelled in G Scale by LGB and the author has often wondered why the colour was changed from green to red.

I cannot be the only one who thrills to envisage long-vanished narrow gauge railway infrastructure. Indeed, it is amazing what one can discover if you look hard enough. The reinstatement of this three-mile long line across the Duke and Duchess of Rutland's land close to Belvoir Castle would make a delightful project, imposing little upon their farmland and bringing in tourist revenue. One can but dream!

***David Joy** adds:* The Waltham Quarry Railway was one of the first two narrow gauge lines I ever visited. As a teenager back in September 1959, I was out of sorts with my parents for spending many months of savings on Eric Tonks' tome with its cover price of 45 shillings (about £60 in today's money).

Above left: The surroundings of Waltham loco shed, rapidly succumbing to undergrowth in September 1959. Securely locked inside were Dreadnought and Cambrai. *Photo: David Joy*

Above: Nantes in September 1959. Although the loco was promised for preservation, it was scrapped in the following year. *Photo: David Joy*

Below: Cambrai on show at Irchester Narrow Gauge Museum, April 2022. *Photo: Clive Hawley*

Except where credited, photos courtesy Industrial Railway Society with grateful thanks to archivist Kevin Lane

Tucked within its 300-plus pages were enticing details of the Waltham system and the neighbouring 3ft gauge Eastwell line. The text sounded an ominous warning – time was running out for the few surviving narrow gauge systems in the ironstone industry and it seemed unlikely that they would continue much longer in their present state.

In those far-off leisurely days with no instant communication there was only one way a young school lad could be certain of the position – and that was somehow to get there! I had a bike, which could then be put on any train, and a map showed that they were only ten miles from Grantham station. So off I set from York, not having the remotest idea of what I would find. Locomotives could be in steam or scrap merchants could already have been and gone.

Ahead of the torch

It was a demanding uphill pedal from Grantham before finally reaching the ironstone quarries. There was no steam in action at either line but nor had the scrapmen arrived. At Waltham there was time to take a quick photograph of Nantes looking sorry for itself and peer through the shed windows at Dreadnought and Cambrai before rapidly cycling back to Grantham and catching the last train home.

Despite the initial disappointment, I was now totally hooked on narrow gauge railways, although sadly another 40 years were to elapse before I launched ***NGW*** in 1999.

The Eastwell line has featured in several issues of ***NGW*** and further coverage of its three preserved locomotives is in prospect. By contrast, the Waltham system has been somewhat neglected, as has the home of Cambrai at the Irchester Narrow Gauge Museum – a feature on this not so well-known museum starts on page 30. NGW

Action-packed farewell to summer

Locos still on their travels, others making comebacks – it's been a busy high season...

Above: Spot the train... *Ralph Ward* got up early on 31st August to capture a misty morning in the Banwy Valley and Franco-Belge 0-8-0T 'Sir Drefaldwyn' making its way with one of the first of the day's trains at the Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway Gala.

Right: A week earlier on 24th August saw *Joey Evans* at the Bala Lake Railway's summer Gala, where yet another quarry Hunslet was visiting, Paul Lewin's 'Velinheli' – here double-heading with resident 'Maid Marian'.

Overleaf: The summer holiday that the Ffestiniog Railway's England 0-4-0ST 'Palmerston' has spent on the Vale of Rheidol Railway has certainly inspired several of our photographers – *Joey Evans* caught one of the final shots with this dramatic image taken on 15th September – soon after the loco was due to head to Devon for the Lynton & Barnstaple Gala and then back home for the Ffestiniog's Bygones Weekend at the start of October.

NARROW GAUGE WORLD

Above: *Andrew Simmonds* was suitably captivated by Palmerston too – especially as on 24th August he happened to be at the Rheidol's Devil's Bridge station in perfect late-afternoon conditions for this atmospheric shot.

Below: Big engines are in the news at present and it's easy to forget that the Vale of Rheidol has been running a big engine for a while now, in the form of the NGG13 Garratt 'Drakensberg'. *Joey Evans*, who appears to have joined the photographers becoming part-time pilots, captured the loco crossing the Rheidol river bridge on 26th August.

Above: The Gala at the Old Kiln Light Railway on 7th-8th September featured a visitor in the form of Kerr Stuart Wren 0-4-0ST 'Peter Pan', but resident Orenstein & Koppel 'Elouise' grabbed its share of the limelight, here accelerating through the Surrey line's forestry scenery. ***Photo: Phil Crook***

Below: And finally – the Welsh Highland Railway's newly restored NG15 'Kalahari' 2-8-2 NG134 tries to hide its sheer size through a wall of steam on its first day of movement on 11th September. We suspect we are going to be featuring this locomotive rather a lot next season...

Photo: Chris Parry/FF&WHR

On the metre...

In the second of our ironstone railway features, *Phil Barnes* visits Irchester Narrow Gauge Museum, a lesser-known collection recalling an important aspect of the UK's industrial history.

The average enthusiast might be somewhat surprised, taking a stroll along a footpath in an East Midlands country park, to suddenly come upon one of the country's lesser-known railway museums – but the location of the Irchester Narrow Gauge Museum is highly appropriate.

The museum became a reality in 1987, when a purpose-built structure was erected in the Irchester Country Park, which can be found about two miles to the south of the town of Wellingborough in Northamptonshire. The museum building and yard are located just to the west of a railway maintenance yard that existed when the site was an open-cast quarry, opened in 1872 and part of the extensive ironstone industry of the East Midlands. This industry was served by a network of lines mainly built to metre gauge and therefore today's museum is very much in the right place.

"This industry was served by a network of lines mainly built to metre gauge..."

Quarrying at Irchester, in what was known as the Wembley Pit, ceased in 1941 but metre-gauge trains ran through the site for another 28 years, hauling ironstone from quarries at Lodge Pit and Wollaston to a standard-gauge connection at Little Irchester.

The line finally ceased operation in 1969, by which time much of the Irchester site had been allowed to revert to the wild and in 1971, the Northamptonshire County Council reopened the area as the Irchester Country Park. Today the park comprises maturing woodlands that were planted in about 1965 and grassy meadows with surrounding trails, while there is also a children's play area and a café.

As mentioned the museum was originally set up in 1987 to tell the story of the former local industry – the concept of the Irchester Narrow Gauge Railway Trust has always been to acquire and preserve narrow gauge artifacts that have been associated with the ironstone industry of Northamptonshire and the East Midlands.

Follow the path

The entry to the museum is not that obvious – access is via quite a long footpath, following the line of the former ironstone railway trackbed. The path starts at a gate near the

www.narrow-gauge-forum.co.uk

café and toilet block in the main car park – the museum itself doesn't have these facilities and in fact, it also doesn't have 'on grid' supplied electricity or water. This is dealt with ad-hoc by the volunteers on working or open days. With the museum at such a historically significant location, the lack of these facilities does not detract from what is on offer to visitors at this unusual and niche collection.

Irchester houses the largest collection of metre gauge locos and rolling stock in the UK, this being a very unusual gauge for railways in this country. Also on site are items relevant to 3ft, 2ft and 20in gauge railways, the collection totalling more than 40 major items.

Local trio

Core of the metre gauge collection are the three Peckett 0-6-0STs which formerly worked around five miles from Irchester at Finedon Quarry. No 85 (1870/1934) was purchased by Alan Bloom in 1986 for his new steam museum at Bressingham in Norfolk – he actually laid 150 yards of metre-gauge track on which to run the loco, then named 'Banshee'. But the building of a standard gauge demonstration line at Bressingham relegated No 85 to a static exhibit and in 1966 it moved to the Yorkshire Dales Railway before being sold to the Northamptonshire Locomotive Group in 1977. It was restored to working order between 1982 and 1984 in the goods shed at Irchester station before being moved to the new museum in 1987.

Sister loco no 86 (1871/1934) which is currently under a long-term overhaul, was sold privately out of the former quarry in 1967 and passed to the Northamptonshire Ironstone Railway Trust in 1975, arriving at Irchester in 1991. The Trust also acquired the somewhat younger no 87 (2029/1942) in 1973 – it arrived at Irchester in 1993 and has been a static exhibit ever since, currently on display outside the museum building.

There is a fourth metre gauge steam loco with quite a history. Corpet 0-6-0T 'Cambrai' (493/1888) worked originally on the Chemins de Fer du Cambrésis in France until 1936 when its home line was closed and the loco bought by dealer Thos. W. Ward Ltd, which ▸▸

Heading: Inside the Irchester Narrow Gauge Museum. Corpet 0-6-0T 'Cambrai' is to the rear while in front, on a wagon are parts from the currently under restoration former Finedon Quarry Peckett 0-6-0ST no 86. For a closer view of Cambrai, see page 24.

Facing page, below left: Peckett 0-6-0ST no 85, which also worked at Finedon, was originally sold to Alan Bloom with hopes of using it on the railway he built at Bressingham.

Above: The third of the Finedon Pecketts, no 87, has always been a static exhibit outside the museum building, with access to its cab for visitors. At left the gate is across the 250-yard long demonstration line, which boasts a significant gradient into the yard.

Below: Yes it's a semi-protected War Department Simplex, but this one is of 3ft gauge and currently lacking an engine.

All photos by Phil Barnes, August 2024

"Several locos are maintained in working order for a good reason – a 250-metre long demonstration track heads off in a north northeast direction and has a gradient of 1 in 36 as it comes into the compound..."

then sold it on to the Loddington ironstone quarry.

Cambrai worked at Loddington until 1956 and then at Waltham quarries until 1960, when it went on display at the Narrow Gauge Railway Museum established at the Talyllyn Railway. With the Talyllyn requiring space for station development, the Narrow Gauge Railway Museum Trust placed Cambrai on loan to Irchester and it moved to Northamptonshire.

The internal combustion (i/c) locos are of equal interest. The name of Hunslet 0-4-0DM 'The Rock' (2419/1941) gives clues to its former life working at HMS Rooke, a Naval dockyard at Gibraltar. 'Milford' is a 4wDM built by Ruston & Hornsby in 1941 (works no 211679) while fellow Ruston 'ED10, Edward Charles Hampton' (411322/1958) was formerly owned by British Railways.

A trio of 3ft gauge locos are also present – semi-armoured War Department Motor Rail 4wPM no.1363 of 1918 which currently has no engine, and a pair of Rustons, 4wDMF no.338439 of 1953 and a former Kilvington quarry 0-6-0DM (281290/1949) which is currently off site.

Narrower gauges

The collection of rolling stock includes plenty of interesting items including two more gauges – 20in gauge wagons and a rail-mounted winch from Ravensthorpe Reservoir, 20 miles from Irchester, and a 2ft gauge oak-framed wagon which forms part of a life-sized quarry diorama created within the museum building. More metre gauge stock includes a hand crane that came from Ravensthorpe's lumber mill and a gun cotton ammunition van from the RNAD at Milford Haven, while local rail history is further represented by the only surviving Wellingborough Iron Co flat wagon.

Several of the i/c locos are maintained in working order for a very good reason – adjacent to Peckett 87 is a gate that allows trains on to the 250-metre long demonstration track. This heads off in a north northeast direction and has a gradient of 1 in 36 as it comes into the compound! On the side of the yard there is a signal near the railway access gate and up towards the shed is a water tank with the inscription South Durham Steel & Iron Co Ltd Irchester Mines along its side; the water supply for this comes from the roof of the adjacent museum building.

Further artefacts on display, along with some excellent models of the

Facing page: The museum is about much more than locomotives and rolling stock. Artefacts from the area's industrial past, a full-size cameo representing iron ore quarrying, and some well-built models help to tell the story.

Above: Internal-combustion locos 'Milford' and 'ED10' are both Ruston & Hornsby products.

Below: The hand crane, also metre gauge, came from a lumber mill at Ravensthorpe Reservoir, 20 miles away.

Below right: The Royal Blue paintwork of 'The Rock' hints at its naval past, as does the loco's name. Behind the loco, even the water tank is a part of local industrial history.

Islip blast furnaces and of Little Irchester and the surrounding district, akin to a 3D map, serve to provide a comprehensive look into the area's industrial history.

Irchester Narrow Gauge Museum is primarily open on a Sunday – entry is free of charge but of course donations to help maintain the collection are most welcome. There is also a shop selling railway ephemera which will also help you 'part with your money'!

While none of the steam locomotives on site are currently active, the diesels can be seen in action on the last Sunday of the month, when the railway's operation is demonstrated.

If you are in the area on a Sunday a visit is highly recommended. NGW

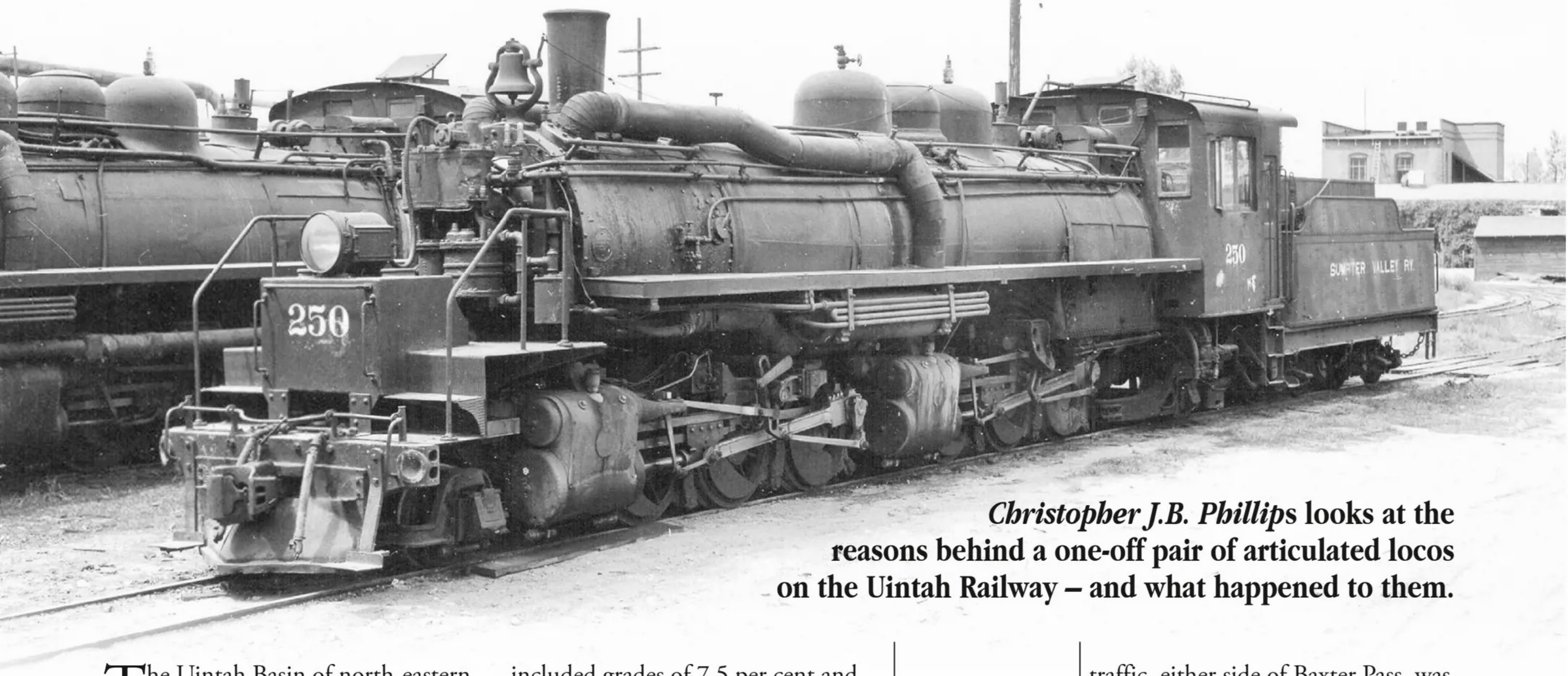
More Information

Further details of the museum, including opening times and an email address for enquiries are at www.irchesterrailwaymuseum.co.uk

Phil would like to thank Alex Adams for his help with information and proofing for this feature.

Additional reporting provided by Andrew Charman.

Two unique Mallets



Christopher J.B. Phillips looks at the reasons behind a one-off pair of articulated locos on the Uintah Railway – and what happened to them.

The Uintah Basin of north-eastern Utah was the site of extensive deposits of gilsonite, an asphaltic hydrocarbon used in the production of paint, varnish, flooring, roofing and electrical insulation. First discovered in 1869, it was developed commercially in the 1880s. The Uintah Railway was formed in 1903 by the Barber Asphalt Paving Company, creating a 19-mile 3ft-gauge line to the Basin from a junction with the Rio Grande Western at Mack – a place named after the president of the company.

Although one of the last narrow gauge lines built, it was beset with difficult geographic characteristics. The first three miles utilised an abandoned length of the Rio Grande Western track, and then climbed 28 miles to Atchee at the base of the Baxter Pass.

The section over the Pass was built to lumber railroad specifications and included grades of 7.5 per cent and curves of over 60 per cent radius. The original 70 per cent curve at Moro Castle was later amended to 66 per cent. Descending to McAndrews the line continued along Evacuation Creek to Dragon.

Problems for locomotives

The section over Baxter Pass was intended to be negotiated by geared locomotives. Five Shays had been acquired by 1910, another in 1920 and a seventh in 1933. Six were two-truck Shays of Lima Locomotive Works construction while no 7 comprised parts of nos 1, 3 and 4 with a new Lima boiler. No 4 was purchased from the Argentine Central Railway in 1910, as was no 5.

The passenger service comprised a combine car hauled by a pair of 0-6-2 tank engines, both built by Baldwin and the only locomotives able to traverse the whole line. The mineral traffic, either side of Baxter Pass, was handled by Baldwin 2-8-0s – no 10 was sold to the Eureka Nevada Railway in 1927. There were two carrying no 11, the first originally supplied to the Denver & Rio Grande, bought in 1904 and scrapped in 1911. The second was built in 1911 and scrapped in 1927.

Above: Following conversion to a tender locomotive no 51, renumbered to 250, is seen at South Baker yards on the Sumpter Valley Railway in May 1947 – the year that this 60-mile line closed. *Photo: Richard Kindig*

Below: No 51, the second and heaviest of the two Mallets in its original form. This model in G Scale on 45mm gauge track was produced by LGB. *Photo: David Joy*

No 12, constructed in 1896 for the Florence & Cripple Creek Railroad, was bought in 1917, reboilered in 1924, and sold in 1937 to the Eureka Nevada & Colorado Railway It is now on display at the Nevada Southern Railroad Museum.

Baldwin 2-8-2 rod engines also worked either side of Baxter Pass. No 30, built in 1911, was scrapped in 1939. No 40, supplied to the New York & Bermudez in 1913 and sold to the Uintah in 1919, succumbed to the cutter's torch in 1939.

In 1908 the company started surveying an extension to the north, crossing White River, to Bonanza and Vernal, with the intention of tunnelling under Baxter Pass and converting to standard gauge. Three million dollars was raised from a bond issue, yet the track was laid to 3ft gauge, and extended only 9.6 miles down Evacuation Creek to Watson with a four-mile spur from Rainbow Junction to Rainbow.

Uintah Basin, a major source of the world's gilsonite, kept the railway profitable into the 1920s. But in 1921 in the face of declining passenger traffic, the service was reduced to three per week before in 1929 it returned to daily operation excluding Sundays.

In 1923, Lucian C Sprague was

hired initially as superintendent and subsequently as general manager. He believed that economies could be made by employing locomotives that could traverse the whole line. With the aid of his master mechanic, H S Shaffer, they presented a specification to the Baldwin Locomotive Works.

The result was a simple expansion Mallet articulated tank engine, 2-6+6-2, Uintah's no 50. It had a gross weight of 263,300lb and a length of 45ft 8in with 42in drivers, 15 x 22in cylinders and Walschaerts valve motion. It was so successful that a second engine no 51, slightly heavier by five tons, was delivered in 1928. In operation the side tanks were kept full to provide maximum weight over the drivers, water being taken from up to four water tanks drawn behind the locomotive.

By 1935 hard-surface highways had spread into the area, rail traffic declined and abandonment was applied for in August 1938, permission being granted in April of the following year. The last train ran on 16th May 1939 and the railway was dismantled between then and February 1940.

Fate of the Mallets

The two articulated locomotives were sold for $20,000 to the Sumpter Valley Railway of Oregon, renumbered 250 and 251, had tenders added and were converted to oil burning. The tenders were obtained from 2-8-2s, no 250 receiving one from Sumpter Valley no 19 built by ALCO in 1920 and 251 anther from a similar locomotive no 20. The side tanks were left on 250 whilst tests were undertaken to determine what weight was required over the drivers. Scrap rails were added to the side running boards to improve adhesion.

Above: No 250 was out of service in Guatemala in December 1964, but was specially cleaned and fired up to feature in the railroad's annual calendar.

Right: Head-on view of no 250 with the boiler overhang clearly evident as it negotiated some pointwork when posing for the calendar shot.

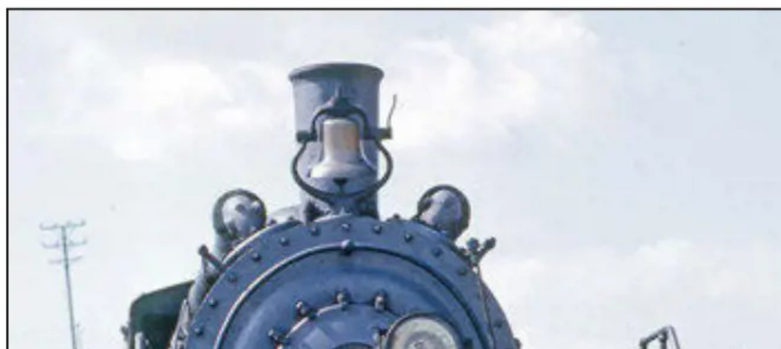
Below: No 251 was pictured in its final days at Esquintla in Guatemala, April 1963.

Uncredited photos by Gordon Glattenberg

The 2-6+6-2s continued to be used for basic motive power making a daily run, known as the 'Stump Dodger', until the 60-mile line closed in 1947. Both were then sold to the International Railways of Central America, owned by the US company United Fruit Co in Guatemala.

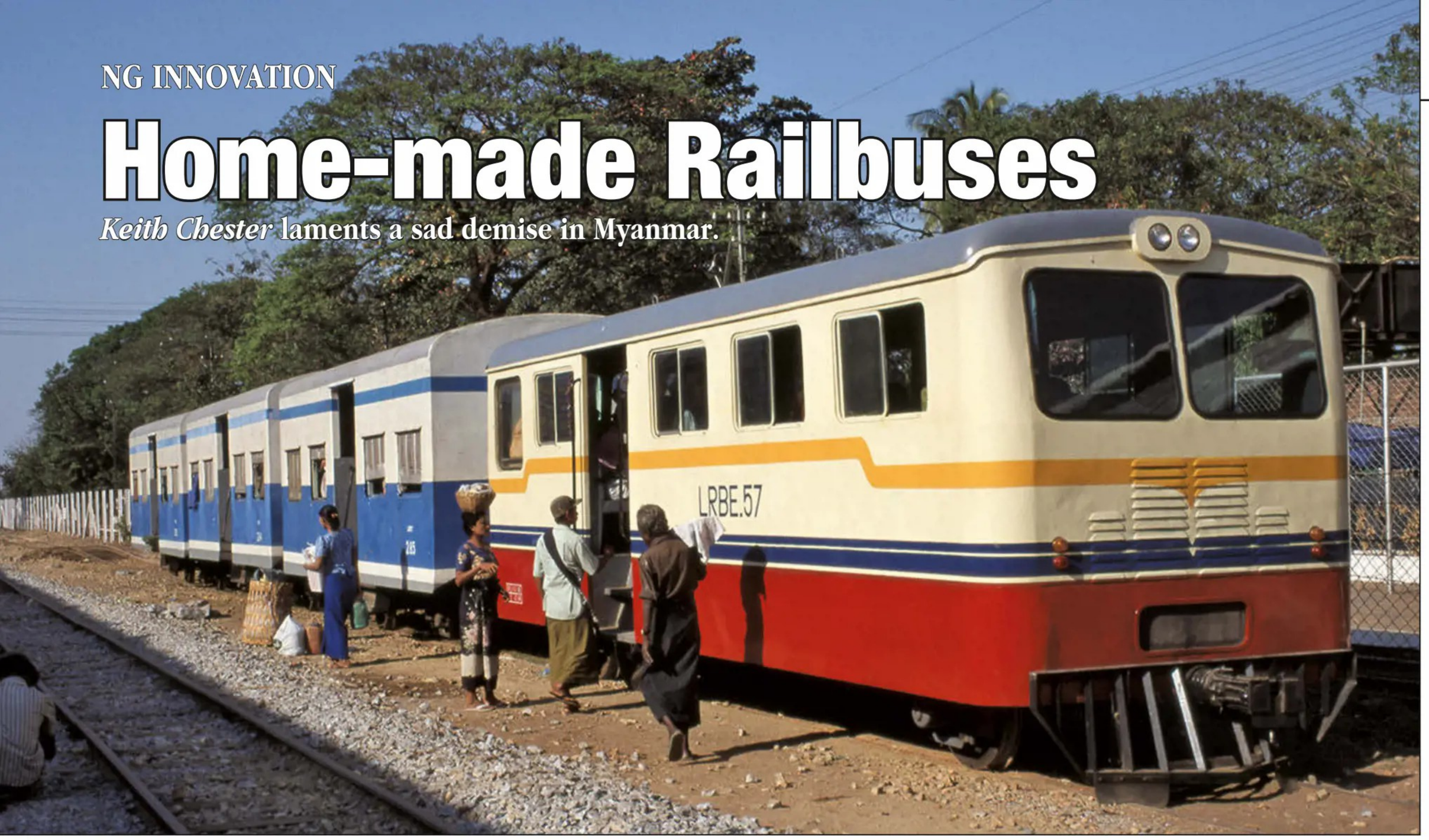
There were traction problems with these locomotives in Guatemala, both being withdrawn from service in the 1960s. No 251 became derelict whilst 250 was fired up in 1964 to be photographed for the railway's 1965 calendar. It was finally withdrawn in the 1970s to lie dismantled in the jungle at Esquintla.

Nos 19 and 20 with their Baldwin tenders were sold to the White Pass & Yukon Railroad in January 1941. Confusingly, no 19 became no 81, and no 20 became no 80. They were both taken out of service in the 1960s, and came back to the Sumpter in 1977. In Guatemala the tenders from the 2-6+6-2s had found new employment as water tanks and in 1993 the Sumpter was able to acquire the two tenders, reportedly for $6,000 plus shipping. No 19 (81) has since been restored with its original tender and is in service, whilst no 20 (80) awaits restoration. NGW



Home-made Railbuses

Keith Chester **laments a sad demise in Myanmar.**



Burma was perhaps the richest country in Southeast Asia in the 1930s but when I visited in 1982 it was among the poorest in the region, its railways visibly creaking at the edges – I have an abiding memory of riding on a packed night train in an open bogie carriage lit by a single flickering candle. The corruption and incompetence of the often brutal military regimes in power since 1962 bear much of the responsibility.

As a consequence, there has been relatively little modernisation of Burma's metre gauge railway system and much equipment dating from the British colonial era remains in use. However, the country, renamed Myanmar in 1989, began to embark on ambitious programmes of railway construction in the 1990s. This has sucked up much of the little investment capital available, resulting in a great deal of make do and mend on the part of the fundamentally under-resourced Myanmar Railways.

A talent for creative improvisation was exemplified by the home-made railbuses introduced in the 1990s. These vehicles, designated LRBE (Light Rail Bus Engine), resulted from an inability to acquire sufficient numbers of diesel locos for secondary services on the new railways.

"With each LRBE emerging from whatever was to hand and the ingenuity of its constructors, it is said that no two were identical..."

Photos: LRBE nos 57 (above), 22 (left) and 66 (below) – each distinctive in their design and livery, pictured in 2004. *Photos: Frank Stenvall*

Road to rail

The LRBEs were built around the chassis of old lorries, usually Hinos from Japan. The rear axle was cut back to metre gauge and its wheels and rubber tyres retained, providing the drive for the new rail vehicle – the two outer axles were unpowered.

The bodywork was assembled from parts of withdrawn locos and carriages. With each LRBE emerging from whatever was to hand and the ingenuity of its constructors, it is said that no two were identical. As such they attracted the attention of enthusiasts and acquired something of a cult following.

In all 78 LRBEs were put into service between 1995 and 2003. Short rakes of simple four-wheel carriages were often attached to the railbuses but reputedly overtaxed the motors of the LRBEs and to have hastened their demise. They plugged a gap but were quickly replaced when sturdier, secondhand railcars began to arrive from Japan. By 2014 only 14 were still at work and all are believed to have been since withdrawn. **NGW**

More Information

Stenvalls has just published *Railways of Burma/Myanmar* by Dieter Hettler, a well-illustrated book on the fascinating railways of this troubled country. It is priced at £32 plus post direct from www.stenvalls.com

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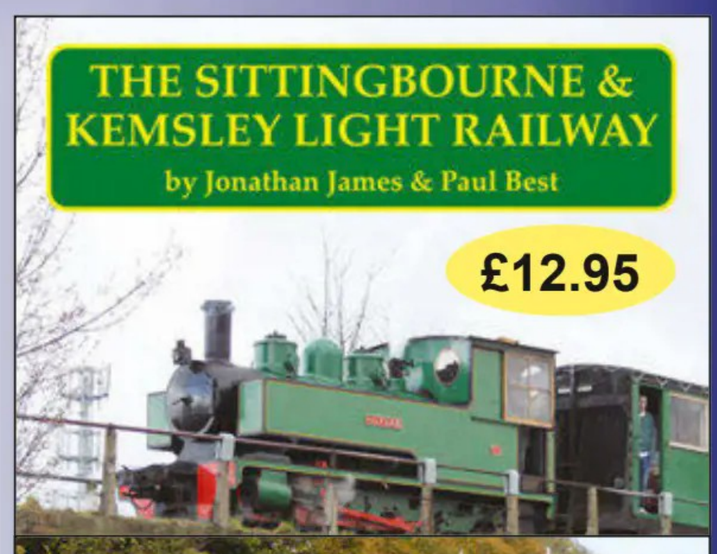
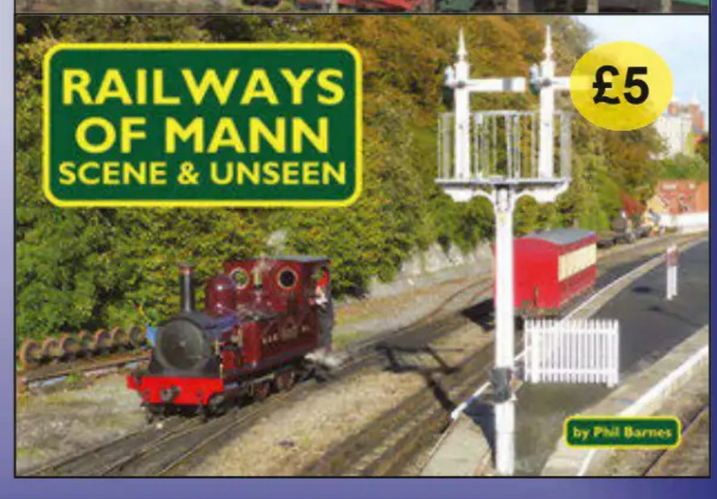
TOPSELLERS!

POLAR BEAR rounds the clifftop curves on the approaches to Headland Station on the Groudle Glen Railway on 23rd April 2023.
(All photographs by James Waite)

UK Narrow Gauge Railways 2024 Calendar

NARROW GAUGE NET





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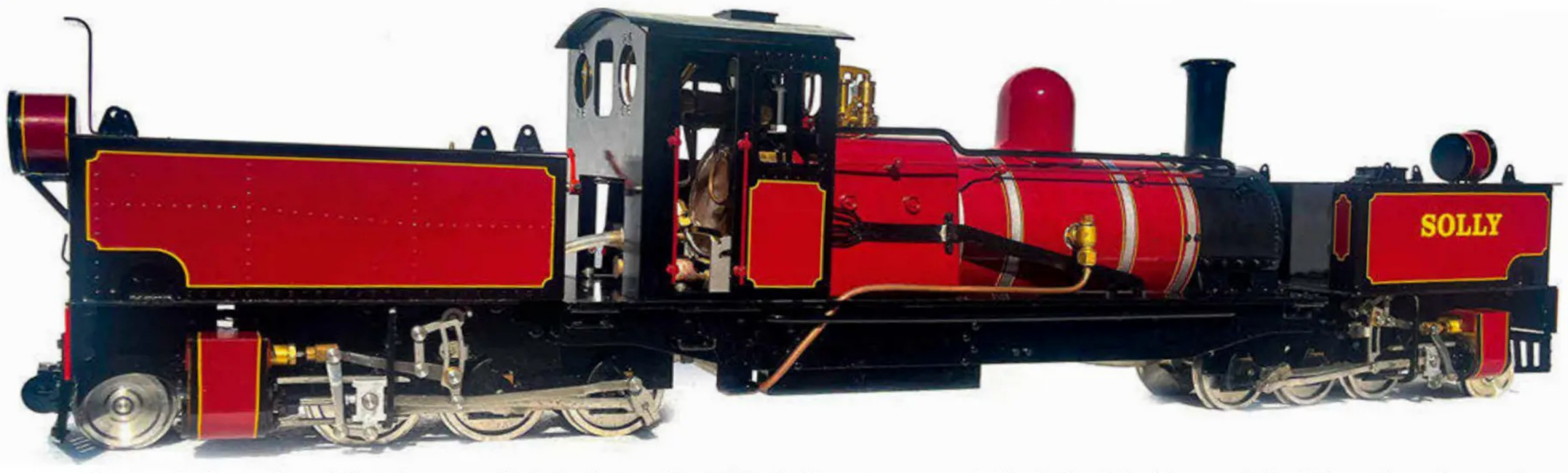

■ Garden Railway Specialists has unveiled the latest 16mm scale live-steam model built for it by Bowande in China, choosing as its prototype the NGG11 Garratt, the first of the type to run in South Africa, initially on the Avontuur route. NG52, the subject of the model, later worked at the Rustenberg platinum mines before being preserved, and today runs at the Sandstone Steam Trust.

The model is to typical GRS standards, with Walschaerts motion and two poker burners feeding the boiler. A displacement lubricator and water gauge are fitted, and the detail includes working suspension and a removable cab roof. A 'chuff pipe' is also fitted to provide a suitable audio note for a working locomotive. The Garratt is regaugable between 32 and 45mm gauge and offered in lined maroon, lined photo grey, lined BR green or plain black.

GRS is now taking orders for the manual version at £5,500, while a radio-control version is also in the works with prices to be confirmed. Apparently 50% of the batch are already sold...

Produced by Garden Railway Specialists
Tel: 01844 345158
E-mail sales@grsuk.com Web: www.grsuk.com

MODEL LINES

Port Wynnstay calls it a day

Port Wynnstay Models, known for its 7mm narrow gauge items particularly of Ffestiniog and Welsh Highland Railway prototypes, has closed. Paul Martin of EDM Models, who hosted the Port Wynnstay range on his NG Trains website, told ***NGW*** that Port Wynnstay owner Phil Traxson has decided it's time to retire.

"Phil took on Port Wynnstay Models in 1996, re-opening it in 1997 and slowly increased the range of models available, but having reached his 77th birthday he has decided to call it a day and get on with the layouts he's building and doing some modelling for himself," Paul added.

At the time of writing the 7mm Narrow Gauge FR & WHR stock, along with the standard gauge range, have found a new home with Andrew Corser at 422 modelmaking. "There will be an intermission whilst production moves from Porthmadog to East Yorkshire. I am sure Andrew will publicise when the items are available again."

National show in November

Plenty of narrow gauge will be on offer at the National Festival of Railway Modelling at the NEC Birmingham on 23rd-24th November, successor to the Warley National and now organised by ***NGW*** publisher Warners. We will have more on this event next month.

Midlands ME show this month

The Midlands Model Engineering Show, which always includes a strong narrow gauge element among its many large-scale models, will take place this year between 17th and 20th October at its usual venue of the Warwickshire Event Centre, close to Leamington Spa. Full details of the event and ticket-booking facilities are on the website, www.midlandsmodelengineering.co.uk

Organiser Meridienne Events has also announced the dates of its 2025 Garden Rail Show, again at the Warwickshire Event Centre and focusing on the 'garden scales', of which the narrow gauge 16mm and G-scale are the most popular. The show is on 1st-2nd March.

Talybont Tales – best-laid plans...

The *NGW* Project Layout returns, with our editor being inspired to make some changes...

Model railways are not simply tracks on a board; they are living, breathing things, and they can evolve – and change...

Regular readers of ***NGW*** will recall our project layout in 009 scale, started in mid 2023 and its construction featuring in several issues of the magazine – until early this year, when things seemed to come to a grinding halt...

The editor can take full blame for this, or at least blame his working life which when not editing this magazine involves motoring journalism, writing about cars, which I've been doing for the best part of 30 years.

Earlier this year an opportunity arose in my 'other job' which I snapped up, perhaps not quite realising just how involving and time-heavy it would be. Basically I've been hanging on grimly through the summer – only now are things starting to calm down to the point where I can again turn to my 4ft x 2½ft of model railway gathering dust in a corner of the office.

A break can be a good thing in fact, because it enables you to look at a project with fresh eyes, and make some changes...

So first to recap. The layout was conceived originally because your editor was in the happy position of regularly receiving some of the recent explosion in new ready-to-run 009 models for review and having to persuade friends with layouts to run them for me. So I came up with a compact design which had a continuous run on the lower level and a fairly stiff climb (in fact stiffer than intended due to miscalculations with my measuring equipment) to an upper display level.

Here I had decided on the concept of a railway museum set up by enthusiasts in the redundant buildings of a Welsh slate quarry, inspired by the Gloddfa Ganol museum that existed for some years in the former (and these days active again) Oakley quarry at Blaenau Ffestiniog.

I was also inspired by a quite remarkable layout called 'Museum of Transport', created by Robin Brogden and which I'd seen at several model railway shows. It had so much going on but I especially liked the

buildings with lift-off roofs showing the museum interior – a smaller-scale concept would give me an excuse to display the collection of locos and stock I was rapidly building up.

Construction went well and I duly invested in some of the superb resin Welsh slate buildings produced by Bachmann – a slate processing house, seemingly perfect for my main museum building, and the loco shed. Which is where I hit my first problem – I thought before buying these structures that they were kits, and I could incorporate lift-off roofs, but they are not only ready-built but exquisitely painted – the thought of trying to carefully slice the roof with a Dremel seemed like sacrilege. So I wasn't sure what to do next.

Cutting edge

And then along came Peco with its new range of laser-cut kits, one of which I review over the page. They include the old slate loco shed at Boston Lodge, with plenty of internal detail and a roof that can easily be made to lift off to view what's within – and you can join two of the sheds together to make a longer building...

So it's all change, and the trackwork on my quarry level is currently being replanned to suit the Peco kits – but what, you may ask, about the Bachmann buildings, much too good to abandon?

I have managed to repurpose them. My display includes a quarry floor level, and an upper level, and this will now be widened to allow the loco shed and slate processing building to be resited on it. In truth this more accurately reflects prototype practice. In the Welsh quarries the raw slate slabs were typically cut and shaped into tiles in buildings on the working levels and the finished product then sent down the inclines, to be gathered in the yard for dispatch down the main line.

So that's basically where we are currently, and the readers that have been following this on-off project can rest assured that this winter will see some more updates as I press ahead. Step one, build a couple of loco sheds – watch this space...

1. A small corner of 'Museum of Transport', the remarkable layout that sparked the concept of the visible section of the *NGW* project layout.

2. Peco's new Boston Lodge loco shed really suits the bill for what is needed on the layout.

3. How it was going to be – the Bachmann slate processing building in its planned position. It's a truly excellent model, but you can't get the roof off...

4. How it's going to be – figuring out the space the new shed will take up.

5. The Bachmann buildings will find a new purpose, on an upper level that will be extended to suit them – it's a good thing foam board is cheap...

PECO LINESIDE 00/HO
LASER CUT KITS
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Tan-y-Bwlch Station Building
(Ffestiniog Railway)
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Easy to assemble kit with laser cut wooden parts
Photo shows painted and assembled kits.
LK-218 Tan-y-Bwlch Station Building (Ffestiniog Railway)

Making a fine cut...

Andrew Charman **builds one of the new laser-cut wood Ffestiniog Railway structures now being offered in 009 scale by Peco.**

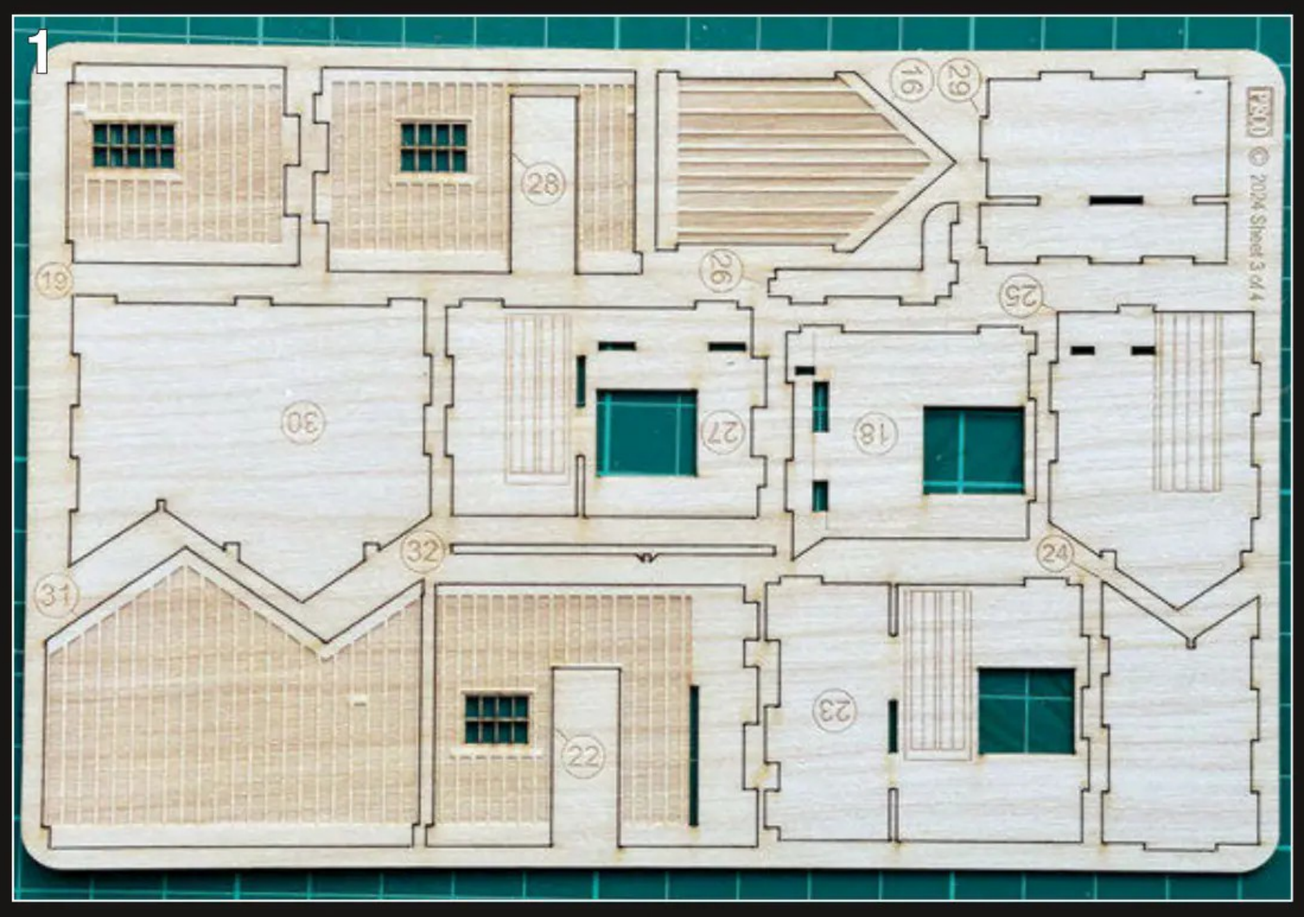
Last month we revealed the new series of laser-cut wood kits in 4mm to the foot 009 scale from Peco, all of Ffestiniog Railway structures. There are currently three in the range, comprising the wooden station building at Tan-y-Bwlch, the old slate locomotive shed at Boston Lodge and the more recent corrugated iron extension added alongside the original.

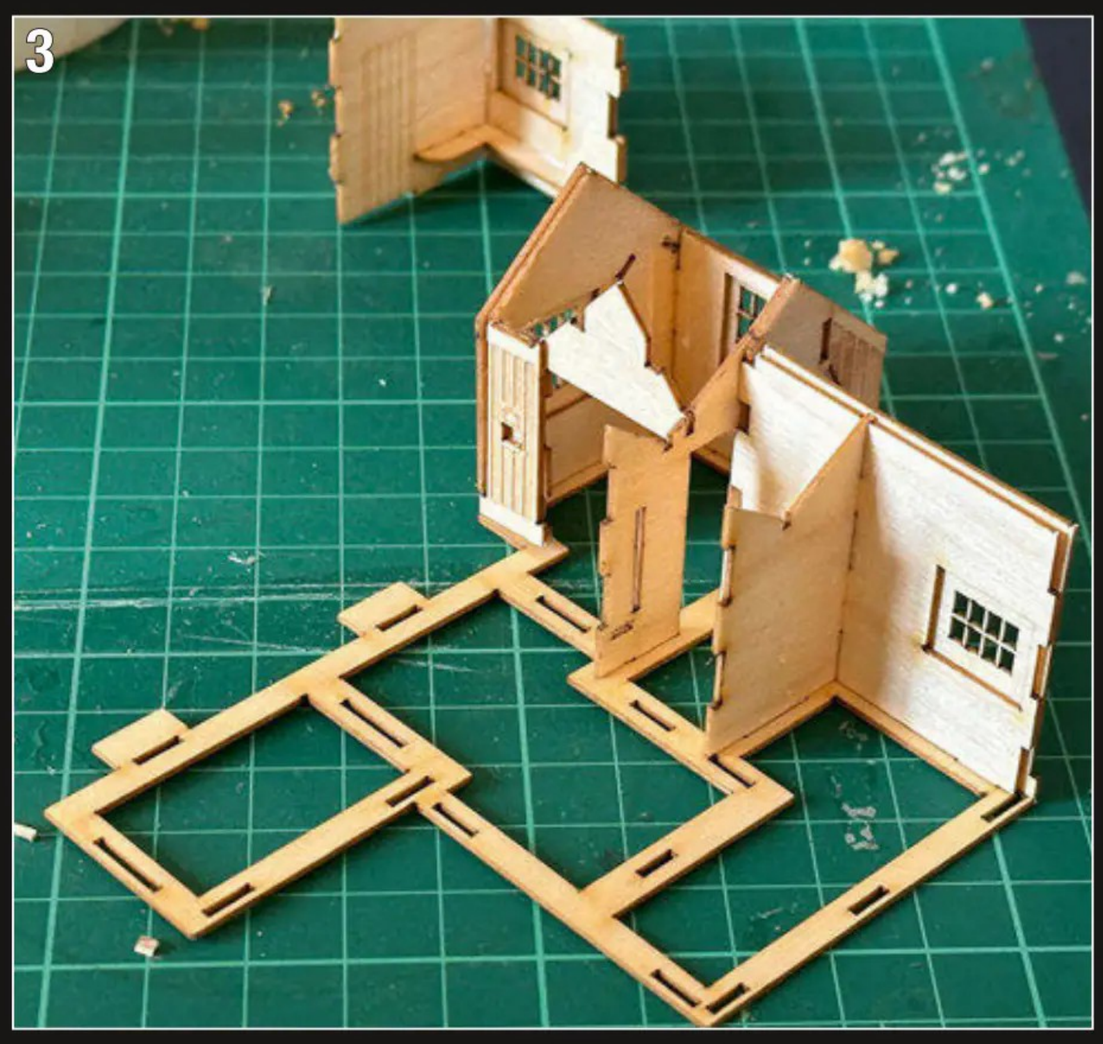
Peco was kind enough to send us examples of all three kits and we chose the Tan-y-Bwlch model to build first and review. The kits are immediately appealing as they carry a significant cost advantage over other ready-built resin structures that are available in the scale, though it must be said that with their hand painting the ready-builts are superb models.

As the picture shows on opening the Peco package one is presented with a series of sheets of wood that have been laser cut to a very fine standard – the level of detail in such aspects as the wood planking and the roof slating makes an immediate impression that does not go away as one builds the model.

Thin slices

Your editor is used to making laser-cut kits, but in the much larger garden scales and with much thicker sheets – the ones in this kit are very thin indeed, no thicker than card, as they should be in this scale, but it





does mean they require delicate handling to avoid any breakages.

The instructions advise gently cutting the parts out with a sharp knife but in all honesty all but the smallest parts press out, some almost falling off the sheet after which any remaining pips can be gently removed with a file or fine sandpaper.

Peco states any general-purpose glue can be used and I used a PVA wood adhesive. But I learnt the hard way that it is essential to have a dry run before gluing any parts together. The walls all come in two parts which are laminated together, and it is crucial that they are accurately positioned to correctly create the interlocking edges between sections. The problem is that the instructions are not very clear in this aspect – it's important to work it out for oneself and avoid unsightly gaps at the corners.

Solid base

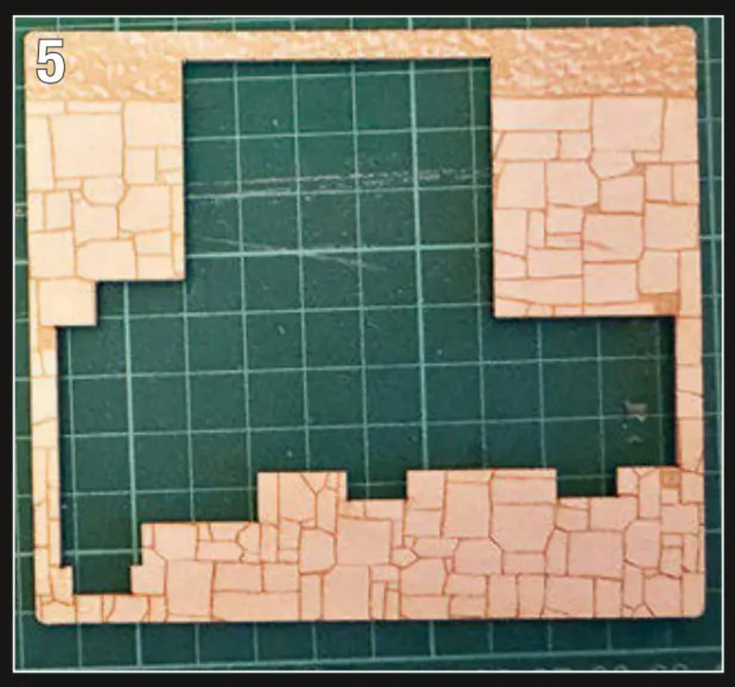
Generally, however, the kit goes together very well and two aspects I particularly liked. Firstly a base frame is supplied with slots in which lugs on each section of wall fit, making it very easy to put the basic structure together nice and square.

Once your building is complete, the frame with the structure on it then neatly slots into its own base which provides a very neat surrounding area of paving which looks rather good.

Once the model is built, careful painting will be essential to ensure one does not obscure all the very fine detail which so raises the level of this building, so much more effective than printed papers and the like which were once the norm in such scales. We haven't painted ours yet so we've provided a photo of the Peco example.

To summarise, in our opinion these are not kits for the complete beginner, though more accurate guidance in the instructions as to exactly where to mate the laminated sections would help matters.

With careful effort, however, one can soon make up a very effective building at an inexpensive price – and it's worth mentioning too that the kit also comes with a delightful extra in the form of a traditional Ffestiniog Railway signal.



We are glad we built this one first as we will know what to expect with the rather more complex loco shed kit – and as stated on the previous spread we have some definite plans for that one... NGW

Produced by Peco Tel: 01297 626204
E-mail: info@peco.co Web: www.peco-uk.com
Price Station building £17.95, stone loco shed £29.95, corrugated shed £19.95

Heading picture: The kit once opened – very fine detail is evident and note the signal that is also included.

1. Each sheet is thin but parts are well laid-out and numbered.

2. Each wall is in two pieces to laminate together – placing needs to be accurate.

3. Neat frame makes assembly a simple process.

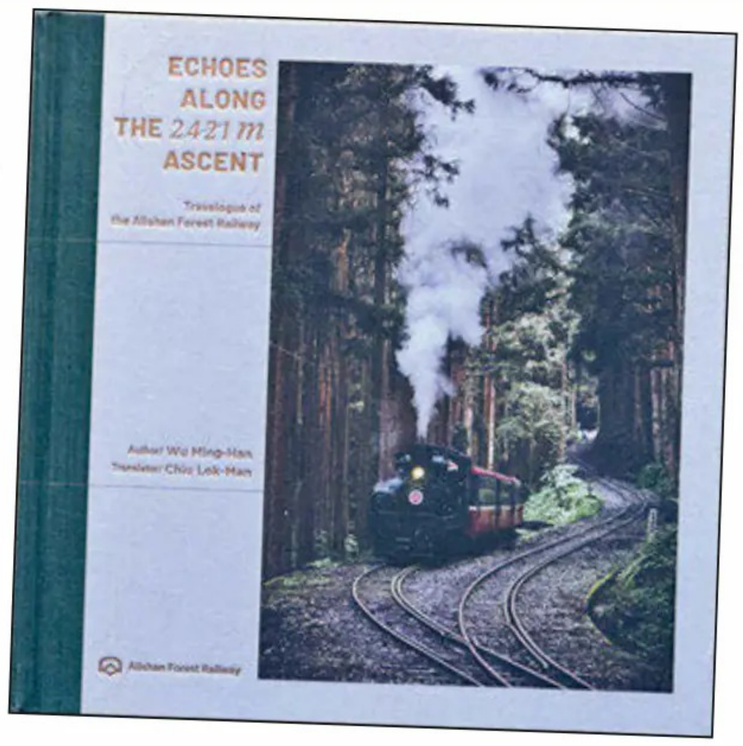
4. Roof sections boast neatly cut signature rounded slates.

5. You even get the path around the building.

6. Careful painting is essential as on this example by Peco.

Photos by Andrew Charman

Echoes Along the 2421m Ascent Wu Ming-Han



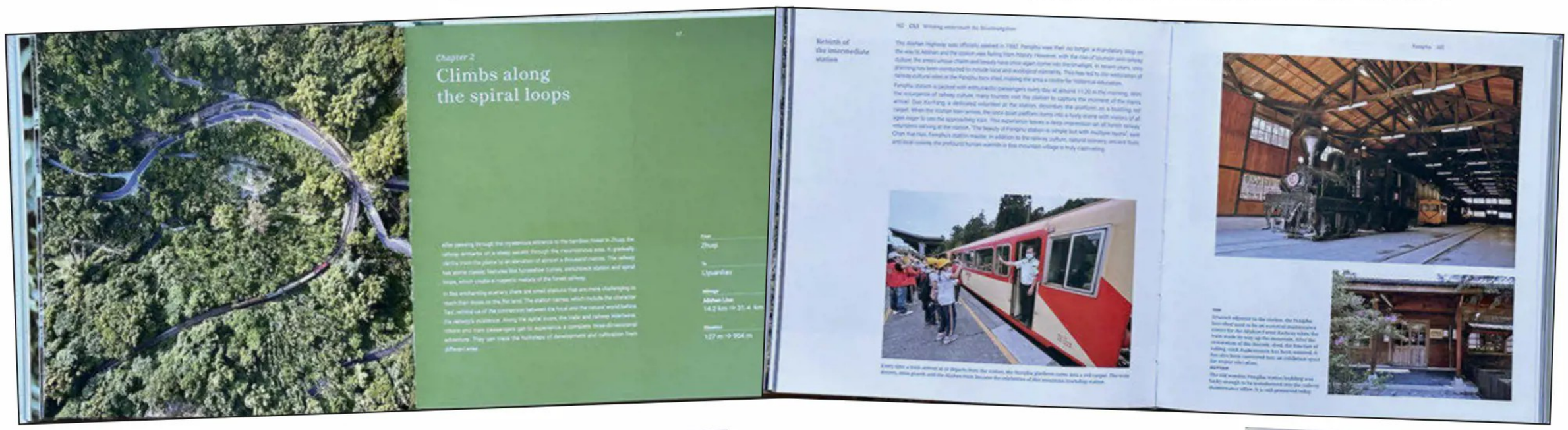
■ Readers browsing recent issues of ***NGW*** cannot have failed to be aware of our appreciation for the Alishan Forest Railway in Taiwan – with its steep gradients, spiral tunnels and yes, Shay locomotives it is as remarkable a feat of civil engineering as the Darjeeling or any other narrow gauge route past or present. Now, to celebrate its full reopening following years of reconstruction caused by typhoon damage, the 2ft 6in gauge line has a descriptive guide that is remarkable in its own way, quite unlike what we are used to in terms of such publications.

Author Wu Ming-Han, or Albert Wu as he is known to his many British friends, having provided much help on matters Alishan to ***NGW*** among others, admits at the start of the book that he was not a railway enthusiast when he first encountered the Alishan – and that is perhaps what makes this book so different and special as a result. You get a little history, but the majority of the title is a travelogue, taking a journey up the line and describing the route – not in the dry terms that can be all too familiar of rail works but instead painting a picture of the environment, the challenges and most importantly the people who live along this line.

Reading the text you can easily imagine being there, but what really drives the impression home are the photos, hundreds of them and of the highest quality, again focusing as much on the Alishan's place in its environment as the line itself.

There are very few railway books that can find a home on the coffee table, but this is one of those rare titles that you can imagine being picked up and enjoyed by those with no interest in railways whatsoever – highly recommended. ***AC***

ISBN: 978-6-26745-428-2
While the book is not generally available in the UK the editorial team has set up an ordering platform providing overseas shipping services at https://railnews.tw/2421m. As a guide the Taiwan price equates to around £30 plus shipping.



Statfold Barn Railway Summer Gala 2024 (DVD)

■ The weather was decidedly damp for at least the early part of Statfold's Summer Gala this year but that did not stop Michael Field producing another hour-long DVD with plenty of action. Not that subjects of interest were hard to find with some 15 locos in steam – two on them on the 12¼-inch gauge Mease Valley Railway including the brand-new Exmoor Steam Railway built 'Carol Ann'.

As is typical with MFVP product all aspects of the event are covered, and there is also a quick tour through the Roundhouse Museum in which another 19 locos were on display... All are accompanied by informative commentary.

Highlights include footage of Bagnall 0-4-0ST 'Sir Tom' visiting from Threlkeld Museum in Cumbria and for this reviewer the 18-inch gauge former Woolwich Arsenal Hunslet diesel 'Carnegie' in action for the first time since 1998 when it last ran at Bicton Gardens in Devon, where I rode behind it as a child in the 1970s.

We at ***NGW*** have constantly extolled the virtues of Sttatfold and if there's anyone out there remaining to be convinced, this video will do the job... ***AC***

Produced by MFVP, The Rowans, Bishop Kinkell, Conon Bridge, Ross-shire IV7 8AW Tel: 01349 861129
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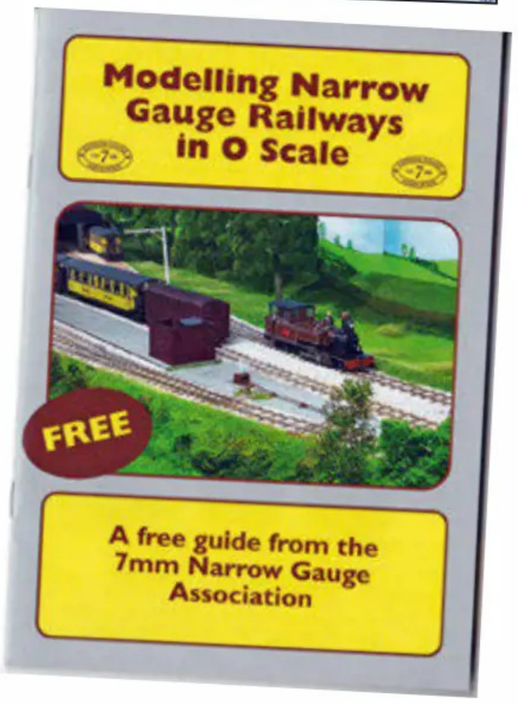
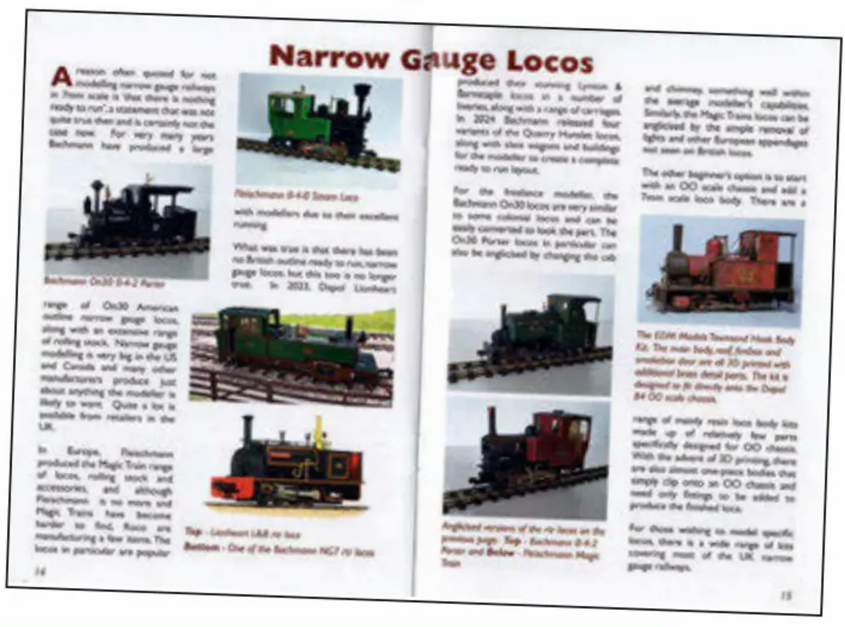


■ Narrow gauge in 7mm scale is on the up at present, a major reason being the release of ready-to-run stock by Bachmann, and now we have a timely release by the long-established 7mm Narrow Gauge Association – a definite must-join for anyone working in this scale by the way.

The A5 booklet runs to just 20 pages but squeezes in enough information on scales and gauges, layouts (including a gallery of pictures to inspire), track and stock to point any novice in the scale in the right direction – and it's free to get hold of! ***AC***

Published by the 7mm Narrow Gauge Association. Hard copies available from Association stand at exhibitions or by sending a C5-sized SAE to 7mmNGA Publications, 5 Link Hill, Storrington, Pulborough, RH20 4LS. Digital copies can be downloaded from the website, https://7mmnga.org.uk/modelling-narrow-gauge.php



■ **Christmas Alert! We want your cards and calendars!** If you have such for sale this year we need details by 9th October latest, to feature in our November-December issue that publishes on 25th October. Ensure your railway's sales department knows of this publicity opportunity – our contact details are on page 3.

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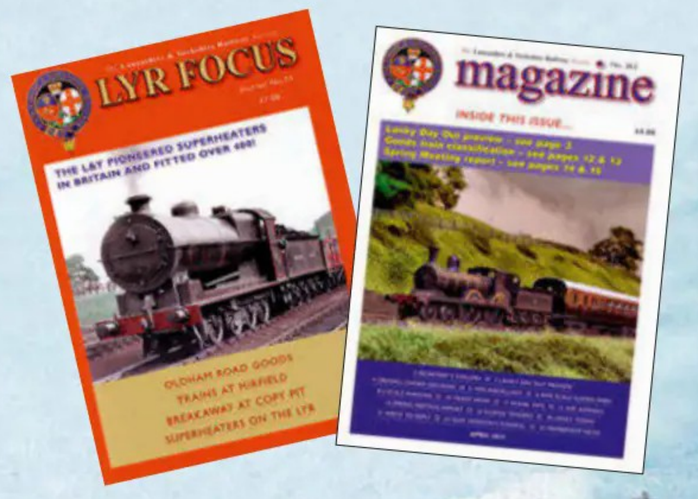

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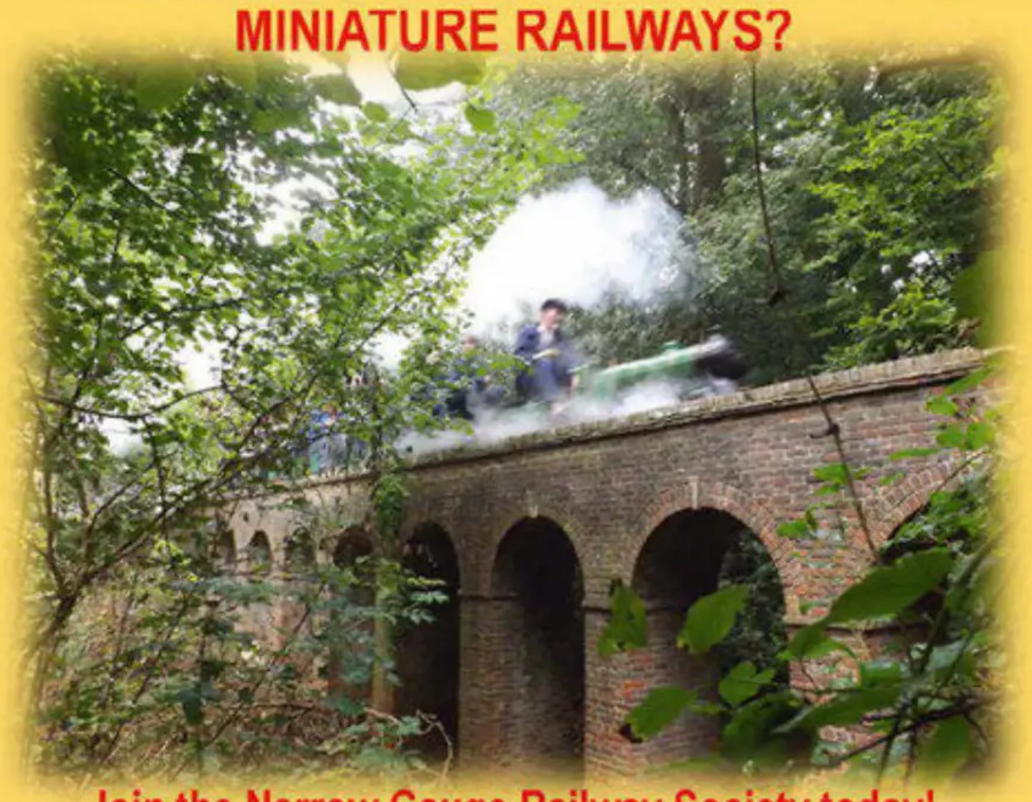

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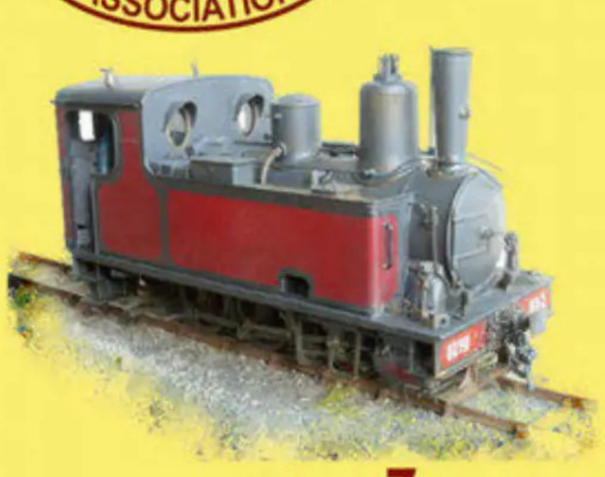


The 7mm Narrow Gauge Association provides help and advice, full colour magazine, and much more. For more information, go to:

www.7mmnga.org.uk

VIEWPOINT

Thessaly memories

I was really pleased to read the article in ***NGW***187 by Keith Chester on his retrieved slides of the Thessaly Railway (*in Greece*) taken in 1972. I also visited this line in 1973 and 1974 wand managed to see a few workings, although by the date only one a day for steam locos was the norm.

At Volos station depot, redundant and dumped locomotives littered the yard, including unusual secondhand rack locomotives from the Brunigbahn in Switzerland. Whilst the rack equipment had been removed, the locos still carried their old fleet numbers.

The Jung locomotives were built for the line as Second World War reparations, and resembled in my eyes a scaled-down version of the DR 64 class. An earlier batch had been built by Krupp in the 1930s but by the 1970s these were out of use. One of the Jung locomotives now remains, which could be restorable, but the whole line out to Kalambaka has now been converted to standard gauge, and connected to the mail line through Larissa. A museum now remains at Volos.

To me the attraction of the Thessaly system was that unlike most narrow gauge operations it retained side buffers rather than a central buffering layout – this was rare. I believe the metre-gauge system based around Osijek in former Yugoslavia also operated with side buffers.

I believe an amazing 0-12-0T from this system has been saved; the lines closed in 1970, but I saw evidence of tracks at wayside stations near Osijek in the summer of 1973.

Bob Brown

Reverse Engineering

I'm writing to rise to the implied challenge at the end of Keith Chester's 'Lost and Found' article right at the back of ***NGW***187, when he wonders if the process of reversing an entire train into a station was unique to Palaiofarsalos in Greece, where he encountered it.

This was the standard practice at Dorchester South on the standard gauge LSWR/Southern main line to Weymouth for more than 100 years between 1857 and 1970. The station was originally a terminus after the Southampton and Dorchester Railway reached it in 1847, with a single straight platform.

By 1857 the Great Western had also reached Dorchester and the South Western had separately decided to extend its proposed main line to Exeter from Salisbury rather than Dorchester, so the LSWR swung its line southwards from a point just east of its station, to join the GWR at Dorchester Junction, and then share running powers to Weymouth from there. This needed a new platform for its down trains, which was duly built, but the old terminal platform for the up eastbound trains for Bournemouth, Southampton or Waterloo was left where it was.

On numerous occasions as a boy I watched the subsequent manoeuvre whereby up trains from Weymouth would run through the station, pull up while points and signals were changed, and then carefully reverse into the up platform, controlled by the guard with a flag from his van and also station staff. After setting down and picking up, away it would go again towards the capital.

This process was thoroughly time-consuming and inefficient, and therefore too good to last, so from 1970 the station was rationalised with a new curved up platform and buildings built, a car park area created behind them and the rest of the former site sold off to the adjoining local brewery for redevelopment. *Sic transit gloria mundi*, but it did make for a fascinating railway cameo in its heyday.

Philip Williams

Andrew C replies: We will of course allow standard gauge in the pages of ***NGW*** *when it's as interesting as Philip's letter reveals – prototype for everything!*

"Both also stopped at a 'boarding point' on the 'main' line beside the works in a way which the current FR staff might find alarming..."

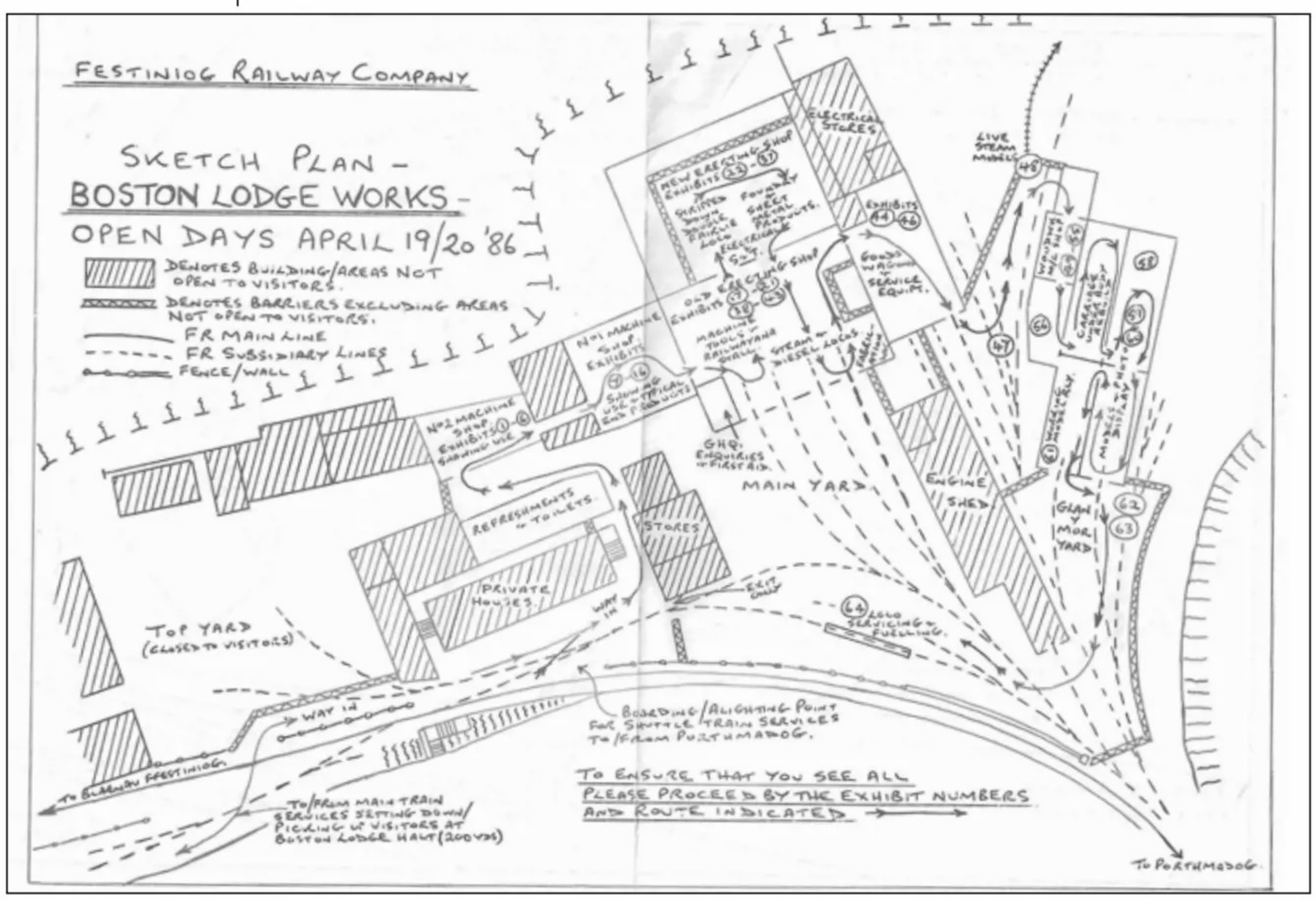
Above right and below: Health and safety anyone? A 150th anniversary tour in 1986 provided a very close-up view of the Ffestiniog Railway's Boston Lodge Works, and a useful sketch map was provided to visitors, as described in the letter from *David Gulliver*.

Rainy day at the Lodge

I was particularly interested to read your account of the new public tours of Boston Lodge in the September ***NGW***. I thought of another, very different, occasion on which I was able to visit the Festiniog Railway's works, nearly 40 years ago.

On Saturday 19th April 1986 my son and I travelled, with many others, on a special excursion train from Leeds to Blaenau Ffestiniog. At Blaenau the 12.20 departure was reserved for us (as was the 16.20 from Porthmadog). The weekend's events marked the 150th anniversary of the Ffestiniog Railway with both 'Boston Lodge Works' and the 'Engineers Depot – Minffordd' open to visitors.

On arrival at Blaenau the mountains were seen to be dusted


FESTINIOG RAILWAY COMPANY
SKETCH PLAN –
BOSTON LODGE WORKS –
OPEN DAYS APRIL 19/20 '86
DENOTES BUILDING/AREAS NOT OPEN TO VISITORS.
DENOTES BARRIERS EXCLUDING AREAS NOT OPEN TO VISITORS.
FR MAIN LINE
FR SUBSIDIARY LINES
FENCE/WALL
ELECTRICAL STORES
LIVE STEAM MODELS
NEW RE-SETTING SHOP EXHIBITS
SMITHS SHOP
FOUNDRY & SHEET METAL PRODUCTS.
ELECTRICAL SHOP
OLD RE-SETTING SHOP EXHIBITS
GOODS WAGONS & SERVICE EQUIPT.
MACHINE TOOLS & RAILWAYANA SHOP
STEAM & DIESEL LOCOS
No1 MACHINE SHOP EXHIBITS
No2 MACHINE SHOP EXHIBITS & SAWING SHED
SLEEPING ACCOMMODATION FOR STAFF & VISITORS
GHQ ENQUIRIES & FIRST AID
MAIN YARD
ENGINE SHED
GLAN-Y-MOR YARD
REFRESHMENTS & TOILETS
STORES
PRIVATE HOUSES
EXIT ONLY
WAY IN
TOP YARD (CLOSED TO VISITORS)
LOCO SERVICING & FUELLING.
BOARDING/ALIGHTING POINT FOR SHUTTLE TRAIN SERVICES TO/FROM PORTHMADOG.
TO ENSURE THAT YOU SEE ALL PLEASE PROCEED BY THE EXHIBIT NUMBERS AND ROUTE INDICATED
TO BLAENAU FFESTINIOG.
TO/FROM MAIN TRAIN SERVICES SETTING DOWN/PICKING UP VISITORS AT BOSTON LODGE HALT (200 YDS)
TO PORTHMADOG.

with snow and very cold rain continued for most of the afternoon. Unfortunately, we would have only about three hours to sample the many available attractions so we limited ourselves to Boston Lodge which afforded shelter from the rain, but precious little respite in the cold.

Visitors were provided with a detailed route plan which wove its way around the works, and a brochure describing the works and warning of the hazards to be avoided, such as 'crawling beneath' a loco.

There was almost too much to see but I was especially pleased to take a close look at the body of van no 10, five years before its restoration was completed, as I was making a model of it at the time.

The many models on show included a superb large-scale Penrhyn loco, 'Charles' while a railwayana stall was another magnet. I came away with a fragment of early Ffestiniog rail and a very small piece of a coach! It carries the number 6 in gold and I believe comes from the Bug Box, now numbered 2 (I would be pleased to find out if I am correct).

All trains stopped at Boston Lodge Halt including a 'Vintage' train drawn by 'Prince' which ran between Porthmadog to Minffordd. It and a shuttle from Porthmadog to the works both also stopped at a 'boarding point' on the 'main' line beside the works in a way which the current FR staff might find alarming!

All too soon it was time to catch one of these shuttle trains to Porthmadog, before boarding the 16.20 train to Blaenau Ffestiniog.

David Gulliver

Correze images anyone?

I have received a message from a French friend, Jacques Maligne, who authored the first 'proper' history of the Tramways de la Correze – a delightful system that finally succumbed in 1958/59. He has asked if I know of any Brits who visited the line in its final years and took photos.

Jacques has listed J B Snell, Derek Trevor Rowe, Lance King, D D Beattie and R C Hyde, but obviously some of those are no longer with us.

I was wondering if, through the readership of ***NGW***, there may be others? Perhaps a mention in your editorial may pull a few names and contact numbers out of the clouds?

Chris Baldwin

Andrew C replies: An interesting request regarding this metre-gauge line from Chris, who I know as a former fellow volunteer at the Welshpool & Llanfair – if anyone can help please contact the editorial address and we'll pass any information on.

From a different age...

Our picture on this page last month of the now Amberley museum-based Guinness Brewery locomotive 'in steam' encouraged ***Michael Bishop*** to send in this fascinating picture of when it first arrived at Brockham Museum in 1967 – the 1ft 10in gauge loco is there, in its 5ft 3in gauge 'runner wagon' and hidden by the component parts of the transfer hoist!

"I don't think we ever got round to assembling the hoist," recalled Michael, who having been treasurer of the Museum Trust until work commitments took him to the West Country also recalled that Guinness had generously paid for the loco's transport.

Also in the picture is Michael's 1937 Talbot Sports Saloon (which apparently still exists). He appeared to favour 30-year old cars at the time, the Talbot's predecessor being a 1934 Austin 7 which apparently had bald tyres and a completely shot 6-volt battery, but thankfully also a starting handle at the front...

More on Brockham – page 48

■ Regular *NGW* correspondent Keith Chester hesitated about sending in a photo he found of the Leighton Buzzard Railway's early years at Pages Park as he thought it was of questionable quality. Well historical interest always outweighs technical quality but it's not that bad Keith! All he can remember is that this shot was taken in June 1972, which was four years after regular passenger services began.

YouTube Watch: online NG films

The online video site YouTube, which encourages users to upload their own clips, is a great source of narrow gauge items. If you've seen a clip that our readers would enjoy, why not send in the link?

■ The laudable efforts in recent months by the Lynton & Barnstaple Railway to improve its communication have included the launch of a new YouTube series, dubbed *Steam on the Moors*. There have been six episodes so far, varying from trials with various types of fuel to a look round the excellent ongoing restoration efforts at Chelfham, with the most recent featuring the launch and dedication of newly named Bagnall locomotive 'Sir George Newnes'. Each episode is around four to five minutes long and very well produced, definitely worth subscribing to if you are a regular YouTube user. **bit.ly/3Zm54UD**

That was the year that...

Narrow gauge news stories from the archives and their legacy...

From 60 years ago

Brockham Museum to close?

At a recent meeting of the museum I put forward the suggestion (*wrote John Townsend*) that it was completely impractical to continue the work of building up a narrow gauge museum at Brockham, and that in the light of three years' experience we should consider that what has been done in these circumstances is remarkable, but that no fruitful future was foreseeable.

We are faced with two alternatives (a) to close the museum... or (b) drastically alter its present structure and organisation... The committee are obviously very reluctant to recommend the former to the Society as it will mean the loss of all the relics as well as ensuring the scrapping of many items which we had hoped to obtain...

Until now the museum has been organised by the younger members of our Society. This is to be expected and is a feature of most bodies of this type, but a stage in expansion has been reached when these younger members, of which I am one, have neither the knowledge, experience or authority to know the best ways to tackle the future. Enthusiasm alone is not enough... Unless we see the museum ultimately becoming something akin to the tramway museum at Crich, and on that scale of activity, then it will never become more than a backyard fad. Brockham could become a unique museum fulfilling a useful purpose in the documentation of Britain's industrial history or it could, and will unless something drastic happens, be a picking ground for scrap merchants. (*NGN, Oct 1964*)

John Townsend continued by inviting members of the Narrow Gauge Railway Society, which had set up the Brockham Museum in a Surrey chalk pit, to an informal meeting on its future, warning that without support at this meeting the museum would close by the end of the year. His bleak tone clearly worked, because as described in our 'Pioneers on the Pilgrims Way' series in ***NGW****109-111, the museum would spend the best part of another two decades at Brockham.*

In hindsight, and as the two pictures on this page by the late Dave Billmore clearly show, the pioneer enthusiasts at Brockham achieved a great deal in what was a very challenging working environment, especially in terms of access to the museum. This 1963 wake-up call can today be regarded as helping to create what is a very fine narrow gauge railway museum that we can enjoy at Brockham's successor location of Amberley in Sussex.

Extracts from *Narrow Gauge News*, the news journal of the Narrow Gauge Railway Society – for more details of the Society and how to join up, go to www.ngrs.org.uk or see the advert on page 45.

Diary & Special Events

■ No responsibility can be accepted for dates on these pages and anyone planning a visit for a ride or to an event should check the line's website and/or social media feeds for the latest update before travelling. Not all trains operate over full lines.

Special Events in October

Only events of interest to rail enthusiasts are included in this guide.

■ **Weekends, 29th-31st, Devon Railway Centre Open Day** Museum nr Tiverton, 2ft gauge line. http://devonrailwaycentre.co.uk

■ **4th-6th Oct, Ffestiniog Railway Bygones Weekend;** Victorian train sets, freight and gravity trains, historical re-enactors.

■ **12th-13th Oct, Apedale Valley Railway War Office Hunslet Running Weekend;** All trains with WD 4-6-0T 1215 of 1916.

■ **19th Oct, Apedale Valley Railway New Members Day;** Behind the scenes, highlighting volunteering opportunities.

■ **20th Oct, Amberley Museum Autumn Industrial Trains;** Various locos operating, freight workings.

■ **26th-27th Oct, Romney, Hythe & Dymchurch Railway Autumn Gala;** Intensive service, special train sets, double-heading

■ **27th Oct, Gartell Light Railway Open Day;** 2ft Somerset line, frequent timetable. 01963 370752, http://newglr.weebly.com

A Victorian theme is the overriding concern on the Ffestiniog Railway in early October. ***Photo: Andrew Charman***

Tramways

■ **Douglas Horse Tramway** www.iombusandrail.im/heritage/ Daily services in October except Mondays, Tuesdays.

■ **Great Orme Tramway:** *Conwy* 01492 577877, www.greatormetramway.co.uk Open daily between 10am and 6pm

■ **Manx Electric Railway, Snaefell Mountain Railway:** *Isle of Man*, 01624 662525, www.iombusandrail.im/heritage/ Daily services in October except Mondays

■ **Seaton Tramway:** *Devon* 01297 20375, www.tram.co.uk Daily services from 10am

Miniature Railways

■ **Audley End Railway** (10.25in): *Essex* 01799 541354, www. audley-end-railway.co.uk 1st-6th, 26th-31st

■ **Beer Heights Light Railway** (7.25in): *Devon* 01297 21542, www.pecorama.co.uk Tuesdays to Saturdays.

■ **Lappa Valley Railway** (15, 10.25, 7.25in): *Cornwall* 01872 510317, www.lappavalley.co.uk Wed-Sun plus 28th-29th

■ **Littlehampton Miniature Railway** (12.25in): *Sussex* www.littlehamptonminiaturerailway.com Weekends

■ **Moors Valley Railway** (7.25in): *Hants* 01425 471415, www.moorsvalleyrailway.co.uk Weekends and 28th-31st

■ **North Bay Railway**, Scarborough (20in): *Yorks* 01723 368791, www.nbr.org.uk, Daily services

■ **Rhyl Miniature Railway** (15in): *Clwyd* 01352 759109, www.rhylminiaturerailway.co.uk Closed until Dec Santa trains

■ **South Downs Light Railway** (10.25in): *Sussex* 07518 753784, www.south-downs-railway.com 2nd-5th Closed until Santa trains

What's On

	Tue 1st	Wed 2nd	Thu 3rd	Fri 4th	Sat 5th	Sun 6th	Mon 7th	Tue 8th	Wed 9th	Thu 10th	Fri 11th	Sat 12th	Sun 13th	Mon 14th	Tue 15th	Wed 16th	Thu 17th	Fri 18th	Sat 19th	Sun 20th	Mon 21st	Tue 22nd	Wed 23rd	Thu 24th	Fri 25th	Sat 26th	Sun 27th	Mon 28th	Tue 29th	Wed 30th	Thu 31st
Alford Valley Community Railway: www.avcr.org.uk																															
Amberley Museum: 01798 831370 www.amberleymuseum.co.uk																															
Amerton Railway: 01785 850965 www.amertonrailway.co.uk																															
Apedale Valley Rly: 0845 094 1953 www.avlr.org.uk																															
Bala Lake Railway: 01678 540666 www.bala-lake-railway.co.uk																															
Brecon Mountain Rly: 01685 722988 www.bmr.wales																															
Bressingham: 01379 686900 www.bressingham.co.uk																															
Bure Valley Railway: 01263 733858 www.bvrw.co.uk																															
Cleethorpes Coast Light Railway 01472 604657 www.cclr.co.uk																															
Corris Railway: 01654 761303, www.corris.co.uk																															
Evesham Light Rly: 01386 422282 www.valleyrailwayadventure.co.uk																															
Exbury Gardens Railway: 023 80891203 www.exbury.co.uk																															
Fairbourne Railway: 01341 250362 www.fairbournerailway.com																															
Ffestiniog Railway: 01766 516000 www.festrail.co.uk																															
Great Laxey Mine Railway: 01624 624007 www.laxeyminerailway.im/																															
Golden Valley Light Railway: 01773 747674 www.gvlr.org.uk/																															
Great Whipsnade Rly: 0844 225 1826 www.zsl.org/zsl-whipsnade-zoo																															
Groudle Glen Railway: 01624 670453 www.ggr.org.uk																															
Hampton Kemptn Rly: 07583 560167 www.hamptonkemptonrailway.org.uk																															
Hayling Light Railway: 07902 446340 haylinglightrailway.wixsite.com/ehlr																															
Heatherslaw Light Rly: 01890 820317 www.heatherslawlightrailway.co.uk																															
Isle of Man Steam Rly: 01624 663366 www.iombusandrail.im/heritage/																															
Kirklees Light Rly: 01484 865727 www.whistlestopvalley.co.uk																															
Launceston Stm Rly: 01566 775 665 www.launcestonsr.co.uk																															
Leadhills & Wanlockhead Railway www.leadhillsrailway.co.uk																															
Leek & Rudyard Railway: 01538 306704 www.rlsr.org																															
Leighton Buzzard Railway 01525 373888 www.buzzrail.uk																															
Llanberis Lake Rly: 01286 870549 www.lake-railway.co.uk																															
Lynton & Barnstaple Railway: 01598 763487 www.lynton-rail.co.uk																															
North Gloucestershire Railway: www.toddington-narrow-gauge.co.uk																															
Old Kiln Light Rly: 01252 795571 www.oldkilnlightrailway.co.uk																															
Perrygrove Railway: 01594 834991 www.perrygrove.co.uk																															
Ravenglass & Eskdale Rly: 01229 717171 www.ravenglass-railway.co.uk																															
Romney, Hythe & Dymchurch Rly 01797 362353, www.rhdr.org.uk																															
Ruislip Lido Railway: 01895 622595 www.ruisliplidorailway.org																															
Sittingbourne & Kemsley Railway: 01795 424899, www.sklr.net																															
Snowdon Mountain Rly: 0870 450 0033 www.snowdonrailway.co.uk																															
South Tynedale Rly: 01434 381696 www.south-tynedale-railway.org.uk																															
Steeple Grange Lt Rly: 01629 55123 www.steeplegrange.co.uk																															
Talyllyn Railway: 01654 710472 www.talyllyn.co.uk																															
Teifi Valley Railway: 01559 371077 www.teifivalleyrailway.wales	Trains tba at press time, check website																														
Threlkeld Msm: 01768 779747, www.threlkeldquarryandminingmuseum.co.uk																															
Vale of Rheidol Rly: 01970 625819 www.rheidolrailway.co.uk																															
Waterworks Railway: 020 8568 4757 www.waterandsteam.org.uk	Trains tba at press time, check website																														
Wells Walsingham Rly: 01328 711630 www.wwlr.co.uk																															
Welsh Highland Railway 01766 516000, www.festrail.co.uk																															
Welsh Highland Heritage Railway 01766 513402, www.whr.co.uk																															
Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway 01938 810441, www.wllr.org.uk																															
West Lancashire Light Railway 01772 815881, www.westlancs.org																															
KEY Trains (steam or diesel), Special events, No trains	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31

ENCOUNTERS WITH THE NARROW GAUGE

Early Days at Pant

Donald Brooks **first visited the Brecon Mountain Railway at Easter 1982.**

With its six-coupled Baldwin tender locomotives and the unusual sight of a caboose in its trains, the Brecon Mountain Railway (BMR) cultivates quite an American image these days. When the line opened in 1980, though, it provided a much more European experience and in its very first season it could scarcely have been more Welsh, with ex-Pen-yr-Orsedd 0-4-0ST 'Sybil', Hunslet 827 of 1903, hauling the one-carriage trains.

In the year after a German import took over in the shape of a loco from the Mecklenburg-Pommersche Schmalspurbahn (MPSB), a closed 60cm gauge network in the north east of what was then East Germany.

The 0-6-2WTT 'Graf Schwerin-Löwitz', Jung 1261 of 1908, was the MSPB's second number 5, later becoming the Deutsche Reichsbahn's 99.3353 before being sold into preservation three years after the MSPB's final closure in 1969. The name is original, though it does not appear to have been carried latterly in Germany, possibly because Conservative politicians and landowners such as the Pomeranian Count Schwerin-Löwitz were not deemed suitable role models in the Communist DDR.

The BMR has always been renowned for the quality of its engineering work and Graf Schwerin-Löwitz was immaculately restored and turned out in an attractive maroon livery. When I first encountered it at Easter 1982 it was easily master of its task, hauling two end-balconied carriages over the two or three kilometres from Pant, just north of Merthyr Tydfil, to Pontsticill, where the station is spectacularly situated overlooking the reservoir.

The 1ft 11¾in gauge track was laid on the abandoned trackbed of the standard gauge Brecon & Merthyr Railway, itself closed not long before the MPSB, with the work including the replacement of several bridges and a deviation at the southern end where the original route was unavailable.

Above: Despite the short length of the early Brecon line, the scenery was compared to North Wales. As 'Graf Schwerin-Löwitz' returns to Pant, Pontsticill reservoir can be seen in the background, with beyond the Bannau Brycheiniog, the Brecon Beacons.

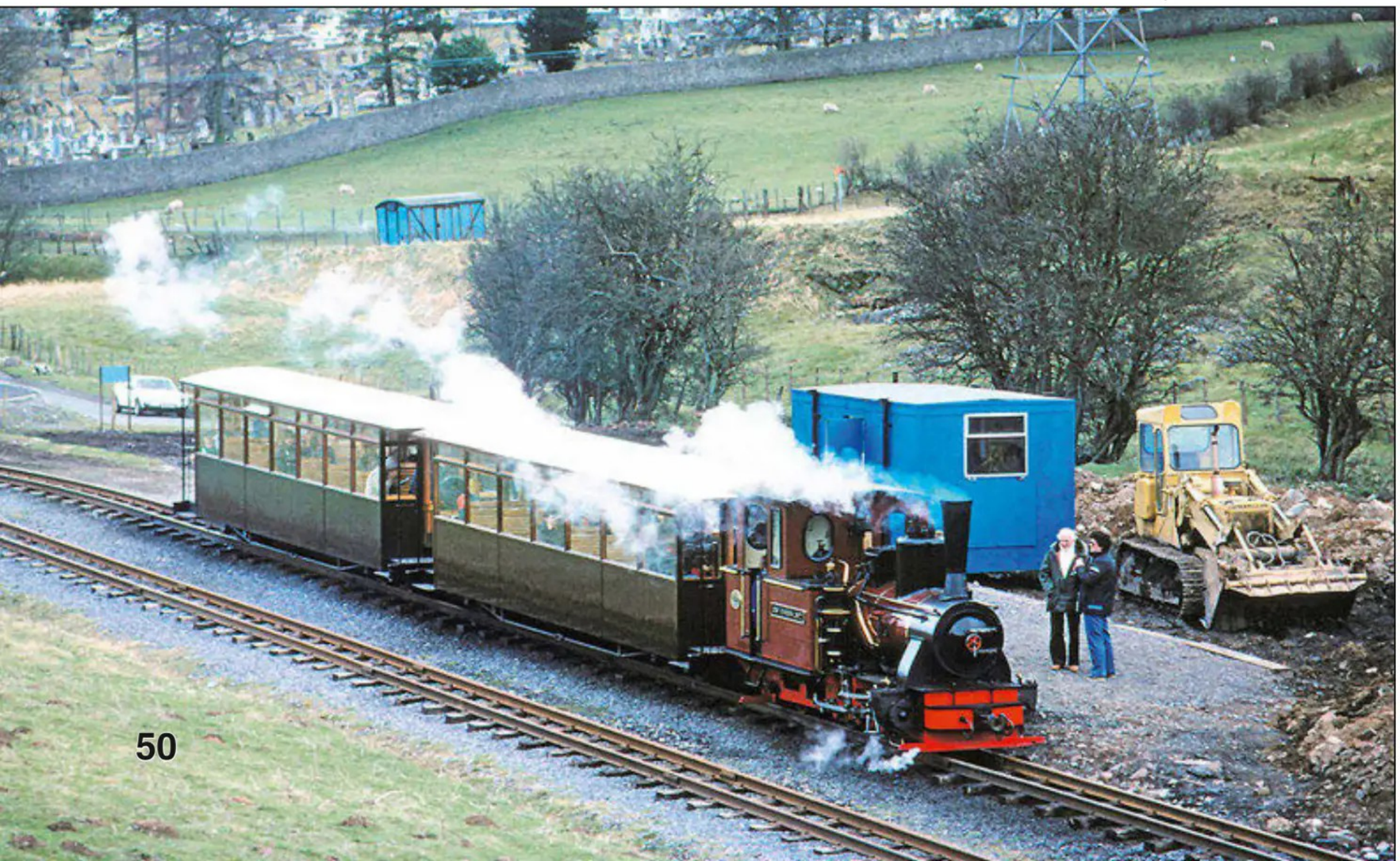
Below: In 1982 Pant station was a building site as work began on the new terminus building. Tickets were sold from the Portakabin.

Photos by Donald Brooks, 10th April 1982

Work in progress

In 1982 Pant Station was still under development and consisted of a short, unsurfaced platform with a run-round loop and Portakabin for ticket sales. Excavations were continuing around the site and although it was all fairly basic it meant that trains could operate over the short but scenic route to generate income for the project. I recall how impressed I was when I returned later in the decade to find the new multi-level combined station and works complex transforming the site, a lasting tribute to the drive and vision of Tony Hills, the line's founder.

Since the 1980s the BMR has been extended in two stages and now provides an 8km run over severe gradients up to Torpantau. Sadly the climb proved too much for Graf Schwerin-Löwitz. In late 2023, at much the same time as the Vale of Rheidol took over the BMR, the locomotive, which had by then acquired a tender, moved to the Rheidol's new Aberystwyth museum as a static exhibit. Following the death of Tony Hills in 2015 the BMR had seemed unsurprisingly to lose some of the momentum from earlier days, but under its new ownership and with new management in place it looks set for a bright future again. **NGW**



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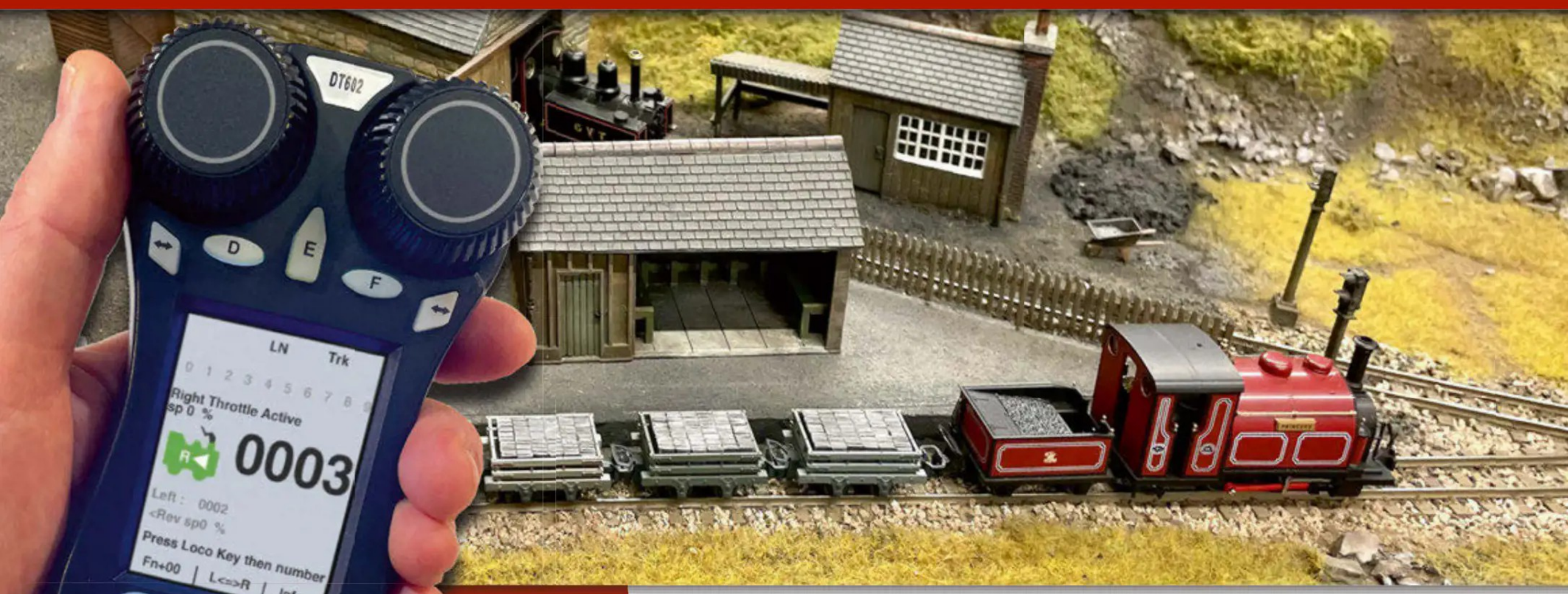

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